

# AN APPRECIATION FOR INDIAN CUISINE AMONG BANGKOKIANS AND FOREIGN TOURISTS IN BANGKOK: A CASE STUDY

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**Abstract:** *The aim of this research is to study the degree of appreciation for Indian cuisines among Bangkokians and Foreign Tourists in Bangkok. It is based on a survey of 13 famous Indian Restaurants in Bangkok. The research, conducted in July and August, 2012, looks at restaurant service in terms of ambience, taste, quality & hygiene, price and service staff, with taste and quality & hygiene being the two important aspects. Both descriptive and inferential research was used in this study. 260 questionnaires were collected. The reliability value of all the variables was more than 0.6. The findings show that the degree of appreciation by consumers varies with the demographic factor considered (nationality, gender, age, marital status, income, and education).*

**Keywords:** *cuisine, Indian restaurants, ambience, taste, quality, hygiene, SERVQUAL.*

## 1. Introduction

Food tourism, going places out of a strong interest in food and drinks, motivates people to travel (Wolf, 2002). Food lovers always look for unique and different dining experiences during their travel or visit to restaurants (Richards, 2002). Tourists visiting destinations for reasons other than food may also end up having memorable dining experiences. Food may thus provide opportunities for tourism destinations to double up as food destinations. One country with such potential is Thailand.

Tourism in Thailand is critical to its economy. It is the backbone of its growth and one of the fastest growing industries. The tourism industry accounts for 6.5 % of the country's GDP. According to official statistics, in 2011, Thailand received 20 million visitors, this in spite of the flooding which affected major portions of northern, central region and Bangkok itself (Thailand: Tourist arrivals from 1998 till 2011. Quarter 2007-2011).

Bangkok has grown rapidly as a focal tourism center and is also becoming a food destination in Asia for tourists visiting Thailand. They can obviously try local food. They can also try a whole array of

international cuisines. Among the many cuisines available in Bangkok, Indian cuisine has a special place as it has played a major role in the popularity of the Indian Restaurants in Bangkok. The distinct and unique flavor and aroma of Indian food have been some of the main reasons for the liking and spreading of Indian restaurants in Bangkok.

In some measure, Indian food has also been underrated and has not received all the attention it deserves, mostly because of some low-quality, unauthentic Indian restaurants that have given a bad name to the cuisine. Though calling themselves Indian restaurants, they serve oily food. The fact is Good Indian food is not spicy or oily but it is well balanced with different kinds of spices like Cardamom, Ginger, Turmeric, Cumin etc, which have tremendous health benefits.

Indian Cuisine, however, has recently been gaining worldwide recognition. In London, Chicken Tikka Masala has become a signature dish in some restaurants and is very popular among British. It has also been rated among the top seven world's best cuisines. Indian food and Restaurants are creating a buzz all over the world. Indian restaurants are known for offering fine dining that suits one's taste buds. A number of entrepreneurs have also been creating a great buzz with Indian meals available at

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