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## **INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES FOR INTEGRATING AND PROMOTING CATERING SERVICES IN THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY**

### **ІННОВАЦІЙНІ ТЕХНОЛОГІЇ ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ ТА ПОПУЛЯРИЗАЦІЇ КЕЙТЕРИНГОВИХ ПОСЛУГ У СФЕРІ ГОСТИННОСТІ ТА ТУРИСТИЧНІЙ ІНДУСТРІЇ**

In the modern context of tourism industry development, an important factor in the success of a tourism product is its ability to adapt to individual consumer needs. One such adaptive service is catering, which enables flexible meal arrangements based on location, event format, budget and the cultural preferences of clients.

The integration of catering services into the tourism sector requires the development of a comprehensive model that takes into account economic, logistical, marketing, and infrastructure aspects.

Catering services comprise a range of activities related to providing food outside the traditional restaurant setting. These include food delivery, serving, staff service, technical support, and sometimes even entertainment programs [1].

In tourism, catering services can take various forms tailored to the specifics of travel conditions, locations, target audiences and event formats (Table 1).

The term «catering» was first adopted in the professional lexicon of the aviation industry, but today its usage has expanded significantly – encompassing events of various scales from private gatherings to public events and playing an increasingly important role in the tourism industry [2].

This flexibility allows catering to be customized to meet the requirements of different tourism segments, such as event tourism, gastronomic tourism, business tourism, cultural or religious tourism and others.

Table 1

**Types of catering services in the tourism industry**

<b>Catering Type</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Scope</b>
Onsite	Service at the event venue, without a stationary kitchen	Festivals, conferences, weddings
Mobile (food trucks)	Mobile food outlets, often in the street food format	Safari tours, excursions, camping
Picnic Catering	Organization of outdoor meals using eco-tableware	Eco tours, cycling tours, adventure tourism
Corporate	Service for business trips, trainings, conferences	Business tourism
Specialized	Thematic or national menu (vegan, halal, kosher, etc.)	Author's gastronomic tours

For the successful implementation of catering in the tourism process, effective collaboration among key stakeholders is essential:

- **tour operators and travel agents** – form package deals that may include catering services;
- **catering companies** – direct providers of services ordered by tour operators;
- **the hotel and restaurant business** – partners in supplying resources, personnel, and equipment;
- **local authorities and event organizers** – create the conditions for catering services during festivals, exhibitions, and other events.

The cooperation of these stakeholders makes it possible to expand the range of services, improve the quality of tourism offerings, and build unique competitive advantages for the region.

The successful implementation of catering services in the tourism sector requires a comprehensive approach that considers multiple interrelated aspects:

**Key aspects include [3]:**

- **systemic approach:** viewing catering as an integral component of the tourism product;
- **marketing approach:** focusing on consumer needs, market analysis, and target audience behavior;
- **innovative approach:** incorporating modern technologies and unconventional service formats;
- **environmental approach:** adhering to sustainable development principles, including zero-waste practices and the use of local resources.

The introduction of catering into tourism is a complex, multi-stage process that demands careful planning, logistical coordination, and market adaptation [4].

Table 2 presents the stages of implementing catering services in tourism.

Table 2

**Stages of catering service implementation in tourism**

Stage	Content	Tools/Methods
Preparatory	Demand analysis, study of tour features, development of catering service business model	SWOT analysis, tourist surveys, cost estimation
Design	Menu development, logistics, definition of service format (food trucks, picnics, buffets), selection of equipment and personnel	Preparation of technical specifications, menu maps, delivery routes
Piloting	Testing services on individual routes or events, collecting feedback, identifying weaknesses	Test tours, customer surveys, analysis of complaints and suggestions
Scaling	Expanding the geography of services, concluding agreements with operators, launching advertising, automating booking	CRM systems, online platforms, advertising in social networks

The initial and most critical stage involves analyzing the tourism market to identify potential demand for catering services. This includes studying the behavior of the target audience, characteristics of tourist flows, seasonality, and types of travel (e.g., business tourism, festivals, recreational tourism). Additionally, a competitive analysis should be conducted to evaluate existing catering infrastructure and identify unmet needs. The findings from this stage form the foundation for strategic planning.

At the design stage, a catering concept is developed, including the type of service (stationary, mobile, food courts and delivery), characteristics of the target audience, and market positioning. Creating a unique selling proposition is essential – this may be based on regional cuisine, sustainable practices, organic products, or original presentation formats. The business model should address sales channels, logistics, pricing strategies, and financial projections.

For catering services to function effectively, a well-organized material and technical base is necessary. This includes mobile equipment (refrigeration units, heating blocks and transport), tools for food storage and preparation, and an efficient supply chain. A key requirement is compliance with food safety standards, particularly the HACCP system. Assembling a professional team – comprising chefs, logisticians, service staff, and event managers – is also crucial. Integration into the tourism ecosystem relies on active inter-organizational cooperation. Strategic partners may include hotels, tour operators, business travel agencies, cultural institutions, and event organizers. Establishing partnerships helps expand service geography, reduce marketing costs, and ensure a stable order flow.

Pilot testing and adaptation follow. During this phase, catering services are tested in real conditions – at trial events or for small tourist groups. Evaluating the pilot outcomes helps identify logistical issues, service shortcomings, and

customer feedback. Based on these insights, it is advisable to fine-tune technological processes and service structures.

If pilot testing is successful, the next step is scaling operations, supported by an active marketing campaign. This involves brand creation, visual identity development, promotion via digital platforms (websites, social media, aggregators), and participation in exhibitions, food festivals, and tourism forums. A particularly promising avenue is working with the business segment – providing catering for conferences, seminars, and corporate events.

The final and ongoing stage involves systematically monitoring catering service performance, ensuring compliance with quality standards, regularly updating menus, and continuous staff training. Modern trends emphasize environmental responsibility, including reducing single-use materials, composting waste, and supporting local producers.

In conclusion, catering in tourism is a dynamic and adaptive form of gastronomic service that enhances the quality of tourism products, increases consumer satisfaction, and boosts the competitiveness of tourism enterprises. Its implementation requires a systematic approach encompassing in-depth market analysis, strategic planning, cross-sector collaboration, and continuous operational improvement.

The innovative integration of catering into the tourism industry holds significant potential for enhancing service quality, expanding service offerings, and implementing sustainability principles. As such, catering represents an important competitive advantage that adds uniqueness to the tourism product.

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