

DEFINING STREET FOOD

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ABSTRACT

Street food is a culinary attraction and cultural representation that includes a wide range of food and beverage options sold in public areas. However, despite growing interest in street food no clear and common definition exists. Based on a comprehensive literature review, this research examines the multifaceted dimensions of street food across six main themes to provide a comprehensive understanding of the street food context: type of street food, location of sale, street food vending structure, form of business, street food characteristics, and features of street food. A scoping literature review methodology was applied to investigate journal articles published between 1984 and 2024 in Thai and English to clarify the definition of street food. The categorization of street food is found to be highly diversified and comprises a wide range of food and beverage options. The location of street food sales is a crucial factor, as vendors primarily operate in public spaces. The use of different street food vending structures demonstrates the flexibility and diversity of vending strategies. Different business forms were identified from the informal and formal sectors including individual entrepreneurs and family businesses. The several distinctive characteristics of street food experiences influence consumer behaviors and attitudes towards street food. Ultimately, the research reveals the value of street food, and the broader economic and cultural influences on communities. Overall, the study enhanced understanding of the comprehensive role of street food in society and provides substantial insights into the culinary diversity, social and economic importance, and cultural value of street food in urban areas.

Keywords: Street Food, Definition, Business, Culinary, Gastronomy

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