



HERITAGE FLAVORS RESTAURANT

Ayşe Güler, Heritage Flavors Restaurant, Sustainable menus based on local ingredients

WHERE- Bursa, Türkiye

Business in Numbers

Year established: 2021
Number of businesses: 1
Employees: 9
Energy as a % of costs : 5%
Local Sourcing Ratio : 85%
Digital Channel Presence: 70%

Ayşe's Story

My name is Ayşe Güler. I am 42 years old and a graduate of the Tourism Management Department at Uludağ University. After many years of working as a restaurant manager in Istanbul, I decided to return to my hometown of Bursa. By restoring my family home, I established the Heritage Flavours Restaurant, which preserves cultural heritage while embracing a sustainable approach to cuisine.

How is sustainability visible in daily operations?

At Heritage Flavours Restaurant, sustainability is at the heart of all operational processes. All decisions, from daily procurement to menu planning, are made with environmental and cultural balance in mind. The restaurant prioritises seasonal ingredients in its menu, combining traditional recipes with modern presentations to support local producers and strengthen its commitment to sustainable gastronomy. Additionally, it employs local staff, ensuring the business's economic contribution remains within the community.

How is food waste monitored or reduced?

To reduce food waste, portion control, daily stock tracking, and demand-driven production principles are applied in the restaurant kitchen. Leftover food at the end of the day is analysed and used in the next day's production planning. Thanks to this method, food waste has been reduced by approximately 20% over the last six months. Most of the items on the menu are fresh and made to order, thus minimising overproduction. Additionally, local farmers utilise organic waste for composting, thereby establishing a circular relationship.

What is the role of local sourcing?

The restaurant's supply chain relies almost entirely on local producers. Meat, dairy products, olive oil, vegetables and fruit are sourced from small family businesses in and around the UNESCO village. This approach both reduces the carbon footprint and contributes to the strengthening of the local economy. Furthermore, the story behind each product on the menu is conveyed to the customer through the connection with the supplier, deepening the uniqueness and cultural context of the experience.

How does community involvement support sustainability?

The business has actively integrated the knowledge and skills of the local community into its business model. Women producers living in the village collaborate in the production of jams, bread and local pastries. The restaurant also hosts local art events and sponsors cultural heritage days in the village. This community-based approach supports not only economic but also social sustainability.

How is digital used to grow and promote the business?

The digitalisation process increases the restaurant's visibility and simplifies the experience. QR code menus provide quick access to information, and reservations are taken via online platforms. In addition, digital storytelling techniques are used to visually showcase the village's cultural heritage and the origins of the dishes. This has created a unique brand image for both local and foreign tourists.

What data is informing key decisions?

The business bases its decisions on customer feedback, sales performance reports and cost analyses. Data obtained through the digital reservation system is used for menu planning and peak period forecasting. Social media interactions also serve as an important reference point for understanding customer trends.

How is social media shaping customer relationships? Use of AI?

Social media is one of the most powerful tools for telling the restaurant's story and interacting with customers. The business shares its seasonal menus, supplier stories and cultural events via Instagram and Facebook. Although no AI-based system is currently in use, customer reviews are analysed manually and taken into account when updating the menu. In the future, the integration of AI-powered feedback analysis tools is planned.

What tools support energy or waste tracking?

The restaurant manually monitors energy consumption and uses LED lighting, energy-efficient kitchen equipment and natural ventilation systems to increase efficiency. Waste management is integrated into the municipality's recycling infrastructure. Glass, plastic and organic waste are collected separately, with organic waste being directed to local farms.

What are the challenges of going digital in a rural setting?

The area where the restaurant is located has infrastructure limitations due to the preservation of its historical texture. Despite these conditions, the business is carrying out the digital transformation process in a gradual and inclusive manner. Internet connection interruptions sometimes cause disruptions in the digital reservation system. Furthermore, the local population, which has a high average age, is not accustomed to digital tools, requiring some operations to be carried out manually. Despite these circumstances, the business is gradually advancing its digitalisation process and providing regular training to its staff.



Sustainable gastronomy means bringing together the values of the past with the responsibilities of the future.



Describe your leadership style? What principles guide your daily decisions?

Restaurant management adopts a participatory and value-based leadership approach. This leadership philosophy encourages empathy and creativity, which are fundamental attitudes in designing a sustainable customer experience. Daily decisions are based on the principles of transparency, local collaboration, and cultural sensitivity. The manager views employees not only as staff members but also as representatives of the brand.

An example of how you have led through adversity? What lessons did you take from crises like recession or flooding?

Economic fluctuations and uncertainties in tourism during the initial opening period developed the restaurant's crisis management skills. Management kept costs under control by diversifying the supply chain and ensured operational flexibility by simplifying the menu during times of crisis. This process reinforced the importance of resilience and community solidarity in business sustainability.

How is purpose embedded in branding and storytelling? How do your values show up in your business identity?

The brand's story is intertwined with the cultural identity of the region. The restaurant presents each dish as a story; the items on the menu represent local traditions and the labour of local producers. The architectural fabric of the village has been preserved in the design of the space, allowing visitors to experience not just a meal, but a historical experience.

How is sustainability communicated to customers?

Sustainability is conveyed to customers not through direct messages but through experience; the use of local products, simple presentations, décor made from recycled materials, and information cards support this approach. Furthermore, sustainable options are highlighted on the menu with a 'Local & Seasonal' label.

What's next for your brand or sustainability goals? Are there plans for new services, certifications, or partnerships?

The restaurant's medium-term goals include participating in the 'Sustainable Restaurant Certification' programme, joining gastronomic tourism networks and developing joint menu projects with local producer cooperatives. Furthermore, work is ongoing on a digital customer loyalty system and sustainability performance reporting.

How will you connect with the next generation of customers? → What channels, messaging, or experiences will matter most?

Visual storytelling, social media campaigns, and experience-focused events are used to connect with new generation visitors. Activities such as 'Cooking with Locals' workshops, meetings with local chefs, and gastronomic walks attract young tourists. Short videos and influencer collaborations on digital platforms bring the village's heritage to global audiences.



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