Through a qualitative hermeneutical analysis, the present work seeks to identify documents that address local ancestral food cultures in tourist contexts. To this end, 50 researches produced in the period from 2000 to 2016 in 13 countries were selected, and through the use of Guillermo Bonfil’s notion of cultural control, by ancestral populations decision making power over value-added food practices is analyzed. The tourism market identifies and classifies three approaches: a first line of research that proposes the activation of tourism through the enhancement of local cuisines for the tourist market and is integrated by product proposals and interventions in the small communities. The second line responds to critical studies that pay attention to the asymmetries and tensions derived from the heritage process of food cultures. An incipient third line shows horizontal initiatives, integrated by alternative proposals to the neoliberal market that arise from local communities and recover ancient perspectives, are based on the re-appropriation and self-management of their food culture, with an emphasis on the search for autonomy, starting of proposals emanating from the social and solidarity economies.

KEY WORDS: Cultural control, indigenous food, heritage process, tourism.