



## » Prince Edward County, Canada

### 2012 Food Tourism Network Development Programme

October 2012

Having received a phenomenal response to our quest to find Ireland's food champions, fourteen peer nominated food champions were selected to join *Fáilte Ireland's Food Tourism Network Development Programme*.

They travelled to Prince Edward County in Canada on a benchmarking trip where they experienced a bespoke itinerary developed and guided by renowned food tourism destination expert Rebecca LeHeup.

The champions are spread across Ireland and were chosen for their resounding passion and belief in Irish food as well as their commitment to actively influence the future of Irish cuisine and food tourism in their region.

To request a more detailed overview please email:  
[foodtourism@failteireland.ie](mailto:foodtourism@failteireland.ie)

### Food Tourism Objectives

- To build Ireland's food tourism reputation and encourage visitors to stop, spend and stay longer
- To develop networks & relationships within local business, organisations and regional stakeholders
- To enhance regional knowledge base & develop engaging food experiences
- To utilise food tourism as an economic development strategy

### Food Champion Selection Criteria

- A demonstrable commitment to implement change
- A food tourism agenda
- A food business operation in business a minimum of 2 years
- Capacity to lead and/or make decisions
- Membership of food/tourism organisation/s
- Accolades/awards received
- A proven track record of collaboration

## Key learnings in the words of the Food Champions

The participants were asked 'What are the top three learnings that you can apply to your business/region?'

The responses were as follows:

- Start small with a group of committed, service orientated, like-minded people. Nothing is perfect....be prepared to make lots of mistakes and have loads of patience and tact.
- We have much more to offer, but are not yet joining the dots.
- To be sustainable business people must share the pie.
- Importance of culinary tourism, connectivity with the food community and international dimension of food business (we need to begin to see ourselves as a global economy).
- Co-operation. Being really visitor ready. Offering uniqueness.
- Co-opetition is essential to success. Need to offer visitors an experience, not just a product. We need to 'shout' more about our fabulous products.
- Working together for our future is key. Provenance and selling local is so important to the consumer.
- Focus on the region, not just the individual. Co-operation. Create the experience.
- Delivering (& putting value on) experience vs. product. 'Pay for play' – not offering food provision as freebies as current is the culture here (except for charities).
- Quantifying benefits of co-operative initiatives as integrated part of business building versus an add on.
- Working together as a group not as individuals. The relevance and importance of the 'experience'. The need to make sure that the experience lives up to the expectation.
- The message that working together is stronger & holding visitors. Linking diverse businesses to create an overall offering.
- Learning from the 'visitor ready' approach and have tourists able to experience hands on things
- Concentrate on the story – the personal touch. Although I use local product – I should highlight producers more. My café could/should be an integral part of a food trail.
- 'Experience based' rather than 'product based'
- Food tourism experiences don't have to be 'perfect', but the story and delivery needs to be professional and full of integrity.
- Authenticity is key. Authenticity is earned. Authenticity needs the support and respect of the local community.
- Collaboration & co-operation is vital.

## 2013 Food Champions who participated in Benchmarking Programme

Name	Company	Location	Website	Email	Twitter
Anthony Creswell	Ummera Smokehouse	West Cork	ummera.com	anthonicreswell@gmail.com	@ummera
Bríd Torrades	Café Osta / Só Sligo	Sligo	osta.ie	ostacafe@gmail.com	@bridtorrades
Colin Jephson	Ardkeen Quality Food Store	Waterford	ardkeen.com	cjephson@ardkeen.com	@ardkeengrocer
Donal Doherty	Harry's Restaurant	Donegal	harrys.ie	info@harrys.ie	@HarrysDonal
Fergus O'Halloran	The Twelve	Galway	thetwelvehotel.ie	fergus@thetwelvehotel.ie	@twelvehotel
JP McMahon	Aniar Restaurant / Eat Gastropub	Galway	eatgalway.ie	michauxjp@gmail.com	@mistereatgalway
Mark K Murphy	Dingle Food Market	Dingle	dinglefood.com	murpmark@gmail.com	@murpmark
Olivia Duff	Headfort Arms Hotel	Kells, Co. Meath	headfortarms.ie	olivia@headfortarms.ie	@headfort
Padraic Óg Gallagher	Boxty House	Dublin	boxtyhouse.ie	pog@boxtyhouse.ie	@theBoxtyHouse
Ruth Healy	URRU	Bandon	urru.ie	ruthhealy@urru.ie	@urrubandon
Siobhan NiGhairbhith	Inagh Farmhouse Cheese	Inagh, Co. Clare	st-tola.ie	sales@st-tola.ie	@StTolaCheese
Sylvia Meulmeester	Greenes Rest /Cork Food Week	Cork	greenesrestaurant.com	sylvia@issacs.ie	@sylmeulmeester
Therese McDermott	Waterford Festival of Food Ltd	Dungarvan	waterfordfestivaloffood.com	info@waterfordfestivaloffood	@WdFoodFestival
Yvonne Carty	Hey Pesto!	Tullamore	heypesto.wordpress.com	yvonne@heypesto.ie	@HeyPestoie