

TASTE THE ISLAND™

A Celebration of Ireland's Food and Drink

A guide for the delivery of world-class food and drink experiences



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TASTE THE ISLAND

'Taste the island – a celebration of Ireland's food and drink' is a hugely exciting all Island initiative taking place this year. It is designed to provide visitors with access to authentic food and drink, high quality local ingredients and world class Irish food and drink experiences.

Our ambition for the programme is extensive and far reaching but more than matched by the enthusiasm and energy of our food and drinks and wider tourism industry. We want everyone to be part of this celebration and have developed this handy toolkit to support those looking to get involved from our food producers, distillers and brewers; food festivals, those working and demonstrating traditional skills, pubs, cafés, restaurants, city bistros and rural retreats, to name a few.

This initiative supports Fáilte Ireland's strategic imperative to address seasonality and grow revenue by driving increased bednights outside of the summer season while also driving visitors to explore lesser-known locations across the country. Our aim for this initiative is to enhance Ireland's international food and drink reputation over the longer term, and provide visitors with a higher regard for the food experience available on our shores before they get here.

I'm delighted to be working in partnership with my colleagues John McGrillen from Tourism Northern Ireland and Niall Gibbons from Tourism Ireland on this first all island tourism initiative. We look forward to delivering a fantastic Taste the Island celebration of our food and drink this year.



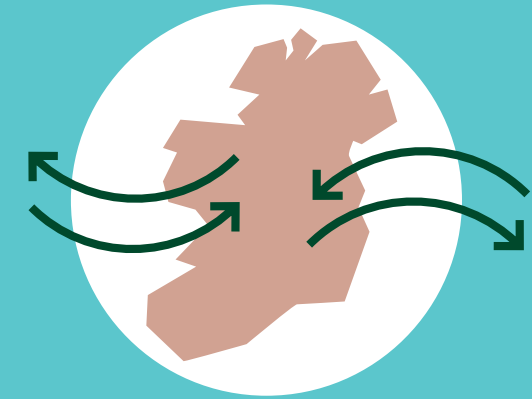
Paul Kelly
Fáilte Ireland Chief Executive

TASTE THE ISLAND

The Task

Globally, Ireland is known as a nation with a vibrant culture, a land of green fields and pristine waters, a windswept coastline and a mild wet climate giving us bountiful, sustainable and high quality food produce. And that's before we take into account the warmest of welcomes and the legendary Irish hospitality which uniquely sets us apart.

"We are creating some of the most exciting food and drink stories ever experienced on this island and our ambition is to bring Ireland's food story to the world"



Internationally, Ireland's food and drink products have gained significant reputation share over the past few years, however perception of Ireland as a place with great food and drink experiences is not yet fully realised. Visitors don't yet consider Ireland to be a food destination.

An estimated
11.2 million
tourists were welcomed to the island of Ireland in 2018 – the best year ever

An estimated
72.4 million
overseas bednights were recorded in 2018, an increase of 35% in 10 years

Food and drink consumption accounts for around
€2.6 billion
or 35% of visitor spend

Ireland's food and drink is exported to
180
markets around the world

↗
Irish whiskey is the fastest growing worldwide drinks category

Ireland has 137,500 farms,
99%
are family owned

225,000
Tonnes of cheese exported worldwide in 2018

60%
of Irish whiskey exports are bound for North America

We've done the research and know that in order to respond to the rapid growth in travel today and increasing visitor expectations around food and drink; an initiative of scale is required to maximise our full potential in all areas. The international competition is intense, if we want to ensure that the tourism industry capitalises fully, this initiative will have to grow on a sustained, annual basis.

We want to channel Ireland's food renaissance and leverage our growing reputation to close the perception gap all whilst ensuring that key consumer touchpoints with a food and drink offering are positioned to deliver a world class experience to all visitors.

"We know that our food and drink experiences are world class, now we want everyone else to know that too"



The Idea

TASTE THE ISLAND

A celebration of Ireland's food and drink

What is it?

Taste the Island is a tri-agency initiative led by Fáilte Ireland, in partnership with Tourism Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland. It is an annual celebration of Ireland's food and drink culture across September, October and November that will provide visitors with access to great events, high quality local ingredients and world class authentic food and drink experiences.

Experiences will include visits to food producers, distillers and brewers; food trails, food festivals, participation in traditional skills, opportunities to forage and fish or sit back and enjoy the best modern Irish cuisine in traditional pubs, small-town cafés, restaurants, city bistros and Michelin-starred experiences, to name but a few.

The extensive programme will seek to create an awareness and renewed appreciation at home and abroad of the strength and richness of Ireland's food culture today.



Ireland's Food and Drink Story

Forget tired stereotypes of bacon and cabbage, rather unearth an ancient Irish food and drink culture that is being reimagined with extraordinary passion and originality by generations of new and old chefs and creative producers and suppliers. Our farmers and fisherman are pushing the boundaries as modern hunter gatherers while respecting the landscape and sea. They provide our food producers and chefs with incredible ingredients, to forge one of the world's best-kept gastronomic secrets.

If travel is all about discovery, today's visitors will uncover a renewed appreciation for the natural ingredients offered by Ireland's lush landscape.

Matched by an ever-evolving cuisine, Ireland is transforming outdated clichés into singular experiences that challenge perceptions of modern and traditional. With its geographic mild climate, green landscape and coastal waters, confident chefs are eagerly reclaiming Ireland's food heritage and proudly showcasing local fare, as Ireland is fast becoming Europe's next big food destination.

Easily traversed yet remarkably varied in its breath-taking landscape, Ireland's diverse countryside gives true local flavour to regional gastronomic experiences.

We are witnessing an explosion of exciting immersive experiences for visitors looking to unlock authentic Irish culture, from charming countryside cafés to stellar Michelin-rated dining, gastropubs to small-batch breweries, verdant farmlands to locally inspired tours and trails.



Dublin as a city of villages, surrounded by mountains and sea, is home to a new wave of inspired chefs, baristas and innovators that are taking their place on an international stage. A buzz with new eateries and creative concepts, here visitors are spoiled for choice. Graze through a bustling food market, relax over brunch of locally sourced fare,

pay homage at the legendary Guinness Storehouse, sample the explosion of whiskey distilleries or craft breweries and leave with an unforgettable flavour of what makes contemporary Ireland tick.



Ireland's Hidden Heartlands boasts a wealth of small-scale independent food and drink producers and honest-to-goodness fare. Here, slow food is exemplified by innovative farmers, award-winning restau-

rants, creative cafés, eclectic markets and proud local festivals.



Northern Ireland is a place made famous by its Titanic-creating ship builders, mythical legends, golfers, poets and Narnia-dreaming storytellers. Maybe it is the helter-skelter weather, maybe it's magic and the proof is on our plates and within our glass. Take time out to savour the sights and sounds of the coastal

villages, lakelands and towns. Regionally focused and distinctive, authentic local produce is key to the Northern Ireland food story.



WILD ATLANTIC WAY

All along the **Wild Atlantic Way** it's about the freshest seafood plucked straight from the Atlantic. It's also about the men and women who mix age-old tradition with 21st-century techniques to bring it from tide to

table and serve it just a few miles (or feet!) from where it was caught.



In **Ireland's Ancient East**, the cuisine is ancient, simple and profound. Rich green pastures in this temperate region yield dishes rich in Irish tradition, from world famous grass-fed beef, a floury blaa or Irish soda bread hot from artisan bakeries. Savour a local whiskey and traditional music session fire-side in a country pub or step back in time to feast

at a grand country house, to experience a true taste of Ireland's living food culture.





The Celebration

Ireland's food and drink renaissance continues; from our chefs winning international awards to renowned food writers singing the praises of our ingredients and our cooking.

We know that food has an unmatched ability to communicate a unique sense of place – providing a direct connection to the history of a place, the soul of its people and the rhythm of daily life.

Taste the Island will tap into our imagination, inspire creativity and stimulate development, leading to exciting new food and drink experiences and events. These experiences and events will create lasting memories for visitors and help generate additional revenue and employment for producers, farmers, fishermen, restaurants and across the wider tourism industry.



The Value

The prize is significant. In 2018, food and drink consumption accounted for 35% of total revenue from visitors to Ireland, equating to over €2.2 billion and €2.6 billion by 2023.

Central to the success of Taste the Island will be the passion and participation of people and businesses from across the full spectrum of food, drink and tourism.

Economic benefits will include:



REPEAT BUSINESS



TOURISM REVENUE GROWTH



GROWING REGIONAL SPREAD



INCREASING DWELL TIME



EXTENDING THE TOURISM SEASON



INCREASED BEDNIGHTS

And it's not just economic benefits. There's also the pride that comes from creating and delivering brilliant visitor experiences that are representative of place, and the confidence that accrues from delivering excellence.

2019 is just the start of an inaugural programme, and we are confident that through collaboration and partnerships, the positive impacts of the initiative and its legacy will be felt for years to come.

The Reason

While perceptions on the quality of the Irish food experience have improved, much remains to be done.

Research shows that before they come here on holiday, many people don't really consider Ireland to be a food destination, not in the same way that they might view Italy or Spain.

But there's also good news, as research shows that post-visit the quality of Irish food is repeatedly praised by the pleasantly surprised visitors. So, there's a gap between perceptions globally and the reality, a gap that Taste the Island can help to close by presenting a new narrative in national and international markets.

PRE-VISIT

VISIT

POST-VISIT



Additional sales in 2019 will most likely be from the domestic market, and from those international markets where there is a relatively short lead-time between decisions to travel and arrival.

The international focus for 2019 will be on creating awareness and stimulating demand among media, travel trade and consumers for travel in 2020 and beyond. This will be achieved through an extensive international publicity campaign, along with trade and incentive familiarisations, and sales initiatives.

Shared Success

Sustainable employment is the ultimate measure of success in our tourism and food and drinks sector, and the benefits of a strong sector go beyond economics. Other benefits include the contribution to vibrant local communities and rural life, critical acclaim from international food writers, and high levels of visitor satisfaction.

Ireland's Food and Drink Tourism Landscape*

		27+ BREWERY EXPERIENCES	9 GIN DISTILLERY EXPERIENCES
17 WHISKEY DISTILLERY EXPERIENCES	4 CIDER DISTILLERY EXPERIENCES	40+ FOOD AND DRINK TOURS	60+ FOOD FESTIVALS IN IRELAND
60+ FOOD PRODUCER EXPERIENCES	170 FARMERS MARKETS	31 COOKERY SCHOOLS	16 MICHELIN STARRED ESTABLISHMENTS
31 BIB GOURMANDS	8200+ PUBS	3000 RESTAURANTS	966 HOTELS

While the numbers grow on a monthly basis, the graphic helps to illustrate the current success of the Irish food industry.

*estimates refer to the island of Ireland.

So, what will success look like for Taste the Island? Taste the Island will be successful when, together, we achieve the following:

- A programme packed full of innovative food and drink themed events and experiences running across September, October and November.
- Food and drink experiences that are world-class such as agri-tours, experiences that are hosted by producers, farmers and fishermen, more opportunities for visitors to meet the maker and so on.
- An enhanced role for food and drink in existing festivals and events that take place during Taste the Island as well as brand new events that focus on food and drink.
- Strengthened and expanded relationships between producers and the food service sector and increased availability of local food and drinks across menu offerings.
- Enhanced skills to make visitor experiences saleable and more commercially viable.

What now?

This guide outlines what Taste the Island is about and gives some ideas on how to get involved. Food and drink are an essential and growing part of the visitor experience. The potential is significant. Get involved to maximise the opportunities for your business and your industry.

SAGE RESTAURANT

At Sage Restaurant in Midleton, County Cork, great produce sourced locally is celebrated. The restaurant sources the majority of its produce from within 12 miles of the restaurant. Meat comes from the lush farmland and dedicated farmers of Midleton and its hinterland, poultry is free-range and is reared by "12 mile" farmers, fish is trawled and line-caught by East Cork fleets in Irish waters, and when the seasons allow, vegetables, fruit and herbs are grown by "12 mile" farmers and growers or foraged. www.sagerestaurant.ie

OX RESTAURANT

The strong belief at 1 star Michelin restaurant Ox in Belfast is that the seasons are set as nature intended, and that imagination and creativity help bring them to life. By working closely with local suppliers, menus are created around the best available seasonal produce. The ethos extends to their drinks menu which features alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks from all over the island. www.oxbelfast.com

KAI CAFÉ + RESTAURANT

Celebrating the best of Irish produce is at the heart of the offering at Kai Café + Restaurant, who's formula is simple: high-quality produce, preferably organic or wild, sourced locally and cooked intelligently. The world influenced menu changes daily to produce great value dishes bursting with colour and flavour. The @kai_galway Instagram account is a true mirror of Kai's food story, full of stunning food photos, daily kitchen antics, ingredient inspiration and life in Galway. www.kaicaferestaurant.com



Sign up to the industry charter

We want to support businesses who are committed to sourcing food and drink that is grown and produced in Ireland. Supporting our local food and drinks businesses is also key to supporting our local economy. We want to bridge the gap between our fantastic food and drinks industry and the tourism industry. By doing this we build our food identity, boost local economies and reduce the environmental impact for everyone.

Businesses that can clearly demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the charter principles below may feature across the Taste the Island platform and associated marketing efforts.



Taste the Island Charter

As a participating business I commit to:



Promote and celebrate Taste the Island.



Strive to use produce from the Island of Ireland.



Prioritise sourcing local food and drink.



Increase awareness of local provenance.



Embrace a seasonal mind-set.



Strive to deliver quality and value for money.



Strive to operate sustainably and minimise and manage waste responsibly.



Participate in the 'Taste the Island' visitor welcome programme.



Sign up to Taste the Island brand usage and digital promotions guidelines.*



Deliver a new or dedicated event to celebrate Taste the Island under one/more of the following pillars:

Here's how we've broken it down:



TASTE OF PLACE

Food Service | Restaurants | Accommodation | Pubs | Cafés | Visitor Attractions

- Include minimum of one or a series of seasonal signature dishes during the Taste the Island programme.
- Include minimum of one or series of seasonal signature drinks during the Taste the Island programme.



MEET THE MAKER

Food Producers | Breweries | Distilleries | Food Hall | Retail | Farmers Markets



MAKE IT YOURSELF

Food Producers | Breweries | Distilleries | Food Hall | Retail | Farmers Markets



TRAILS & NETWORKS

Food Networks | Visitor Trails | Food Tours | Activities



FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Festivals | Small events | Pop-ups | Food Series

*Taste the island brand guidelines will issue early July



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

3



ST. GEORGE'S MARKET

As one of Belfast's oldest attractions, St George's Market is widely regarded as one of the island of Ireland's best markets. It has over 200 stalls that sell everything from fruit, vegetables and fish to antiques, books and clothes. Saturdays see speciality foods as well as crafts, flowers and local photography, while on Sundays there is food and crafts and a backdrop of live music from local bands. www.discovernorthernireland.com



AIRFIELD ESTATE

Airfield in Dublin describes itself as a "38-acre estate that's pushing the boundaries of what agricultural land can achieve and finding innovative ways to surprise and delight people of all ages." As well as being open daily when visitors can collect freshly laid eggs and see the Jersey herd being milked, there are walking trails, gardens, a restaurant and a year-round events programme that includes workshops on foraging, nose-to-tail butchery and basketmaking. www.airfield.ie



EATYARD

Located in Dublin's South Richmond Street, Eatyard presents festivals throughout the year ranging from The Great Eatyard Bakeoff to Eatyard Wine and Cheese Festival to the Eatyard Crisp Festival where Tayto sambos, food competitions, endless crisps and lots of craic are the star performers. www.the-eatyard.com/crispfestival



Be part of the Taste the Island Programme!

We want to increase the availability of Ireland's great food and drink experiences across the island and across all parts of the day.

Whether you're a food producer, a chef, an accommodation business, a food network trail, or a farmer whose passion for the land is matched by your love of telling a good story, Taste the Island presents a wonderful opportunity to expand your food tourism offering and leverage a global shop window.

Ingredients will include a genuine interest in providing high quality local food and drink, ideas and enthusiasm to develop a brilliant experience, and passion to deliver excellence for the visitor.

You can do something on your own or in collaboration with others. It can be something big or small, something that happens once during Taste the Island or something that becomes a regular part of your operation.

We want to create a multifaceted celebration all across our food island. For the plan to work, we invite you to host a Taste the Island celebration of your own.



Know your visitor

Understanding your visitor is a good starting point. Who are they? What interests them? Does your current offering appeal? What more can you do?

Food and drink experiences can influence where people go and what they do. With the economy performing well, domestic demand for Taste the Island in 2019 is likely to be people taking a short break in Ireland, in addition to their main holiday, most likely overseas. The target segments in the domestic market are Empty Nesters and Pre-Teen Families.

In international markets, Taste the Island can help close the gap between pre-trip perceptions and the on-the-ground reality. The international target segments are Culturally Curious, Great Escapers and Social Energisers.

Help paint a picture of your target customer by understanding their motivations. As a result, you will make better decisions about your food or drink experience.

See www.failteireland.ie for more details on customer segments.



Domestic

PRE-TEEN FAMILIES

WHO THEY ARE:

- Families with dependent children
- Spend more money on daytime activities and entertainment – focus on kids
- Some financial constraints
- Want value for money and healthy food for children are important
- Like the convenience of holidaying at home
- Need to unwind from stressful lives

EXPERIENCES THEY LIKE:

- Good value offerings such as picnics
- Healthy and convenient menu offering for children
- Farm visits where the experience caters for children



EMPTY NESTERS

WHO THEY ARE:

- Married or co habiting
- No dependent children
- Like quality relaxation breaks and to reward themselves
- Take frequent domestic short breaks
- Financially comfortable
- Least stressed about day to day life
- Exercise regularly

EXPERIENCES THEY LIKE:

- Visits to food producers, breweries and distilleries
- Guided trails and tours
- Long-table dining
- Experiences that blend food with culture/arts/wellness
- Local food markets
- Food and wine/beer pairings



International

CULTURALLY CURIOUS

WHO THEY ARE:

- Want broaden their minds, explore new culture, landscapes and history
- Want authentic, engaging experiences
- Want high-quality offerings at mealtimes

EXPERIENCES THEY LIKE:

- Food festivals/events with local cuisines
- Visit local producer, processor, distiller and brewer
- Local food markets
- 'Catch and cook' and 'make your own' activities
- Guided trails and tours
- Long-table dining
- Experiences that blend food with culture/arts/adventure/wellness



SOCIAL ENERGISERS

WHO THEY ARE:

- Want fun, exciting, novel experiences
- Like sharing on social media

EXPERIENCES THEY LIKE:

- Urban food tours
- Affordable gastronomic experiences
- Shared experience dining
- Food trucks and stands
- Non-traditional dining, pop-ups
- Socially responsible food concepts
- Indoor food halls, multi-concept
- Food and drink pairing events



GREAT ESCAPERS

WHO THEY ARE:

- Want unique experiences outside the main tourist thoroughfares
- Want rural holidays and food that is good-value, of a wide range (to suit them and young families), and relevant to local activities

EXPERIENCES THEY LIKE:

- Self-guided food and foraging walks/trails that are linked to landscape/seascape
- Farm visits
- Specialist food shops, bakeries and markets
- Non-intrusive, high-quality food offerings, picnic baskets, food trucks
- Long-table dining





Delivering a Taste of Place

More and more, visitors want to experience different cultures through food and beverage-based activities.

Amongst Irish consumers

2/3

believe it is important to purchase local food

2/3

perceive local food to be of high quality with natural and 100% ingredients

3/4

believe that this food is fresher having been produced locally

Nearly 4 in 5

believe that they are supporting the community when purchasing local foods

(Bord Bia)

They want fresh, locally sourced, seasonal food. They enjoy meeting producers, brewers, distillers and farmers. Food festivals, food trails, food tours and cookery schools are all high on their radar.

Great progress has been made in recent years but there's more we can do. By shifting the emphasis away from a cohort of food enthusiasts to the majority of food service providers, we increase the overall quality and availability of the food and drink experience for visitors.

Visitors respond well to the destination brands — Dublin, Ireland's Ancient East, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Wild Atlantic Way, Northern Ireland — so integrate the place story of your destination into your overall story and experience.

With the rise of online social media, increasing the visibility of dishes at all food service levels, businesses should seek to differentiate the offering by drawing on the past to create something new that withstands any fads. Articulating your story and treating a plate as a reflection of that can elevate a dish to an experience and a memory. Now more than ever, it is time to reveal the hidden magic behind the menus and put the link between place and culture at the forefront of Ireland's tourism offering.



MIKEY RYAN'S BAR AND KITCHEN

Cashel in County Tipperary is home to Mikey Ryan's Bar and Kitchen where the ethos is wholesome, seasonal, fresh ingredients sourced from the locality to create delicious, simple dishes. By working directly with local farmers and artisan producers, guests enjoy a 'taste of Tipperary', with fresh food, that as well as being delicious, conjures up feelings of home, nostalgia and comfort. www.mikeuryans.ie

MEWS RESTAURANT

Mews Restaurant in Baltimore, West Cork has a strong focus on seasonal foods from the region. It works directly with the small farmers, market-gardeners, foragers and fishermen of West Cork to source its ingredients, letting their intrinsic natural flavour take centre stage. It's an approach that's certainly working – Mews received a Michelin Star for 2019. www.mewsrestaurant.ie



HIGHBANK ORGANIC ORCHARDS

A visit to Highbank Organic Orchards in County Kilkenny offers a fascinating insight into a small-scale Irish food producer where visitors can hear the apple-to-bottle story of producing organic ciders, syrups and apple spirits. As well as a tractor train tour through the orchards, there's a visit to what's been called Ireland's smallest distillery, and the opportunity to sample the products and purchase them in the farm shop. There are also special events during blossom time in May and during harvest time in October and November.
www.highbankorchards.com



BREAC HOUSE

Describing itself as "a modern retreat at the far edge of Ireland", breakfast at Breac House in County Donegal is described as a chance to slow down, experience real food and enjoy the peace at the far edge of Ireland. Breakfast is based on the season and includes home-made bread, pastries, butter and yoghurt, together with local produce such as organic smoked salmon and seasonal fruit. Guests can also get homemade picnic goodies for lunch, while nearby Dunfanaghy village or the wider area can be recommended and booked for dinner.
www.breac.house

FOCUS ON

RECIPES AND MENUS

Focus on Ireland's natural larder e.g. meats, dairy, plants and seafood. Concentrate on simple recipes that are grounded in provenance. List suppliers and even food miles on your menu or ingredients list.

PROVENANCE

Focus on the ingredients, the land and people that produce them. Tell the story of your relationships with farmers, growers and artisan producers. Understand local farming methods and the terrain.

TELLING THE STORY

Be creative in allowing your customers get a sense of this relationship – through photo walls, featured suppliers, social media, guest appearances. Ensure all frontline staff know your story and have passionate belief in it.

SIGNATURE DISHES AND DRINKS

Develop a signature dish and drink that's created from ingredients that are local or within a defined radius. Celebrate your regional makers. Think about where your visitor engages with you and your food – what about pop ups in unusual tourist locations or outdoors?



Meet the Maker Experiences

High quality and authentic food and drink products are at the heart of food and drink tourism. But they're not enough on their own – a memorable experience must also be provided.

COMPONENTS OF A BRILLIANT FOOD/DRINK EXPERIENCE

AUTHENTIC PRODUCT

Getting this right is at the heart of the experience.

+

HIGH QUALITY SERVICE

Going the extra mile can make all the difference to the customer. Be sure to also make it easy for people to find out about you and easy for them to book or buy your experience.

+

DISTINCTIVE STORY

What's distinctive? How has your local place shaped you and what you do?

+

NARRATION

How you and your team interact with people to tell your story impacts their enjoyment. People love guided tours, but you can also use other interpretation tools.

The right combination of product, service, story and narration means visitors can engage with local people, local culture and local customs.

The island of Ireland already delivers some wonderful experiences, but there is potential and demand for more.

VISITS TO YOUR FARM, FISHING BOAT OR WORKSHOP

As the food experience most sought after by visitors, these visits provide a direct connection between the visitor and real people and real food.

Dining trends to watch out for



Climate Conscious – driven by a growing awareness of the damage plastics are doing to the environment, businesses are shifting towards eco-conscious packaging, and single-use plastic is being replaced by multi-use and compostable.



Plant Based – the shift towards plant based eating continues to grow rapidly meaning businesses need to improve range and quality of menu offering to win customers and drive satisfaction.



Craft Food and Drink Pairing – More consumers are exploring food and drink combinations that enhance their sensory experiences beyond wine, with non-alcoholic beverages, craft beer and whiskey in particular offering opportunities for Ireland.



Small Plates – Dining out is changing, consumers are moving away from formal menu structures to a more convivial offering focused less on frill and more on flavour.

FOCUS ON

YOUR PLACE

What's different about farming or fishing in your particular place? What are the challenges, the benefits, the peculiarities? How have you come to be here? How do you express your connection to your place?

YOURSELF

Let visitors know a little something of yourself, your motivations, your food philosophy. How you learned your craft and from whom. Perhaps you have talented hands, a creative mind or expert know-how?

YOUR INGREDIENTS

Explain the uniqueness of ingredients, highlighting the freshness of your end product.

YOUR CRAFT

Describe the craft – its origins, the traditions that surround it, the nature of the process, and how has it been passed from one generation to the next.

YOUR PASSION

Tell visitors why you do what you do and ensure your team live and breathe that passion too.

ARE YOU NEW TO HOSTING VISITORS?

Here are some tips to help deliver a great experience:

- Introduce yourself and make eye contact
- Use an informal and friendly personal style and tone
- To gauge people's knowledge, ask and encourage questions
- Tailor the tour to suit the audience – content and length
- Include opportunities to taste the food or drink
- Let people have a go at making something
- In advance, provide online booking and be clear about dates, times, durations and if you welcome individuals or just groups
- Easy to find, use GPS coordinates, entrance signage
- Provide phone numbers and email contact details
- Don't forget, give people the opportunity to buy product to take away with them at the end of the visit

If you are new to this, start small, perhaps selecting just one set day, afternoon or even just an hour per week. Stick with it and make yourself available at a time that others can depend on. It will take time to build up awareness that you provide this new experience so collaborate with local tourism businesses to help spread the word.

BREWING AND DISTILLING

Perhaps you offer tours, or you meet visitors through farmers markets or through working with local restaurants? When choosing drinks, people often choose a drink that they want to know more about, as well as drinks based on their taste. Components of the experience may include:

LANDSCAPE

Tell visitors about local grain farming, the soils, the climate and how they all impact the raw ingredient and the end product.

CULTURE

Immerse the visitor in the culture of brewing or distilling in the area – the rise and fall of the industry and its current resurgence.

PEOPLE

Present your drink as an extension or reflection of the people who make it.

PROCESS

Visitors want to know how their drink is made. Your experience can include aspects such as hop variety, ageing the beer, the barley mixture of your whiskey, the botanicals in your gin, the apple crushing, pressing and fermentation processes for your cider. Include tastings and make the experience hands-on!

FOOD CONNECTION

Pair your drink with local food and regional dishes to allow visitors appreciate the interaction of the tastes and flavours.

AVAILABILITY

Let visitors know where they can buy your product during the rest of their holiday and after they get back home.

DINGLE DISTILLERY

Visitors to Dingle Distillery in County Kerry, go right into the heart of the distillery where their philosophy of small, artisan, independent and proud is brought to life through a guided tour that concludes with sampling the product. The production process for its whiskey, gin and vodka is explained, as well as the use of ingredients from the Kerry landscape – local well water for its whiskey, and rowan berry, fuchsia, bog myrtle, hawthorn and heather for its gin.

www.dingledistillery.ie

ECHLINVILLE DISTILLERY

Echlinville Distillery, the first licensed distillery to open in Northern Ireland in over 125 years, distilled its first spirit in 2013. At its distillery in County Down, tours conclude with a tasting, visitors get to hear about its field-to-glass ethos and the story behind their whiskey, gin, poitin and vodka. There's also an afternoon tea experience that combines a distillery tour with afternoon tea in the stunning surroundings of the historic Echlinville Manor House, which is located in the Manor House. www.echlinville.com

RASCALS BREWERY

Living up to its name, Rascals Brewery evokes a spirit of fun and adventure. At its brewery in Inchicore in Dublin, visitors can take a guided and interactive tour that includes the malt room, the brewhouse and the fermentation tanks, and concludes with a tasting of both core and seasonal specialty brews. There's also a programme of onsite events ranging from Beer College to a pop-up Gaeltacht to music events, while its pizzas are cleverly named to help create a fun sense of place; names include Meat me in Inchicore, Kilmainham Pale and The Dublin Ate. www.rascalsbrewing.com



Make it Yourself Experiences

Hands on experiences!

Today's visitor likes the sense of immersion from taking part in an activity, not just as a passive listener/viewer. They're looking for experiences that will deliver benefits such as new learning, cultural experience and overall wellbeing. Visitors want to feel a connection with the places they visit – through the people they meet and the experiences they have. Increasingly, people want experiences that will have a lasting impact – for example to learn a new skill.



The world's no. 1 travel experience is a cooking class in Italy! The Tuscan Farmhouse cooking class offers fresh pasta, an apron and a stunning view of the Tuscan countryside.

(TripAdvisor 2018)

Education is a critical element to understanding a country's food culture. Learning to cook with the best local, seasonal ingredients to understand a country's culinary traditions and food heritage is a quick sure way to build lasting ambassadors for Irish food.



FOCUS ON

TRADITIONAL DISHES

Think about traditional skills that would appeal to culturally curious visitors e.g. Irish stew, Boxty or even the ancient field kitchen of the Fianna!

MODERN IRISH FOOD

It's not about dispelling our image as the land of potatoes and beer, it's about claiming a new status as an island with the world's best potatoes and beer.

DAIRY AND BREAD

Both icons of Ireland's food scene today, cheese making, butter churning and bread making experiences are growing in appeal.

INVOLVING ACTIVITIES

Reinforce the idea of where our food comes from: collect your own eggs for breakfast, strawberry picking, garden foraging etc.

IRISH DRINKS

Whiskey blending, gin infusing and pint pulling are all experiences of appeal. Irish coffee making class anyone?

CATCH AND COOK

Cookery schools could partner with their local fisherman to develop a catch and cook experience for visitors.

ADD VALUE

By sharing stories, cultural nuances and takeaway recipes.

GET THE KIDS INVOLVED

Kids are naturally creative, let them experiment, learn and become our future food ambassadors!

BALLYMALOE HOUSE

Guests at Ballymaloe House in East Cork can step into the kitchen, roll up their sleeves and learn the secrets of bread baking from the pastry chef. They'll need to be early risers though, as the bread baking lesson takes place at 7.00am. If that's a bit too early, visitors can also collect eggs from the hen house or visit the pigs. Other events throughout the year include art and photographic exhibitions, wine events and concerts in the Grainstore. www.ballymaloe.ie



BUSHMILLS DISTILLERY

Bushmills Distillery is said to be the oldest licenced distillery in the world. It's certainly Ireland's oldest working one. Visitors can take a tour and see how this global icon is made. The experience encompasses a visit to the Mash House, Still House, Cask Store and Bottling Hall and after all that, a little dram by a roaring fire. www.bushmills.com



GUINNESS STOREHOUSE

At Guinness Storehouse in Dublin, visitors are promised a "multi-sensory tasting journey that brings the distinctive flavours of the iconic stout to life." There's a choice of visitor options including The Guinness Academy, The Taste Experience (a 1.5 hour tutored Connoisseur session) and the STOUTie, where the visitor's selfie is recreated on the head of the stout. www.guinness-storehouse.com



Trails and Networks

Collaborating for success, there is strength in numbers!

The power of a passionate, well-organised food tourism network focused on visitor impact can't be underestimated. They provide a template for much of what needs to be achieved by demonstrating how food and drink can greatly enhance the tourist experience while boosting economic development and strengthening local food systems.



Food tours are the fastest growing tour experience category in the world.

(AirBnB 2018)

Coming together with other businesses and producers in your area can create a more appealing destination for a visitor and open up new tourism opportunities. Cross business collaboration with producers has the potential to boost local trade and drive tourists to your destination. Key to the success of a food network, is the shared place story and saleability of its experience components.

From the visitor's perspective, food and drink are not usually the driving factor, but part of their overall holiday. Where they sleep, the local attractions, entertainment on offer, the landscape and scenery all play a part too.

Food and drink experiences can play a significant role in any visitor's trip when brought together with the various other elements of their stay to create a more encompassing and engaging visit which make your destination stand out.

Fáilte Ireland is rolling out a number of visitor experience development plans across the country to enable continued growth, dwell time and visitor spend. **To get involved or to find out more, please contact your local regional rep.**



FOOD TRAILS

For visitors, the word 'trail' suggests a self-guided, well-planned route with clear directions. Effective trails go beyond a simple directory of all that's edible in the area. They succeed when there's real collaboration between members as well as a memorable overall story.

- The story of the trail should connect it to the place and be reflected by each trail member.
- Establish common standards for all stops on the route.
- At each stop, have a clearly defined, recognisable point of arrival so the visitor knows they are in the right place.
- Reinforce the connecting story at each location – through signage, leaflets, wall displays and through the people.
- Make it sensory and immersive – engage as many of the senses as you can. Also, give visitors the opportunity to take part, not just to listen or to look. Have product available for people to buy and take back home.
- Make the experiences 'purchasable' at any business involved in the network.
- Cross promotion is a key indicator of a successful trail so ensure that each member aware of and positioned to sell the other.



GALWAY FOOD TOURS

Food and drink are a great way for visitors to get to know a place, and that's the reason behind Galway Food Tours. Their tours visit some of Galway's culinary hotspots and visitors meet cheese makers, brewers, artisan chocolatiers, traditional family-run businesses and young food entrepreneurs. Options include a daytime tour, a whiskey tour, an evening tour, and a food and cycling tour, while one of its newer offerings - The Art House Cinema & Food Tour – takes in a film at Galway's Pálás cinema too. www.galwayfoodtours.com



BOYNE VALLEY FOOD NETWORK

Collaboration is at the heart of Discover Boyne Valley Flavours where producers, farmers, restaurants, distillers and accommodation businesses all work together to showcase the fresh, local produce from the local area in Meath and Louth. Boyne Valley Food Series is a calendar of events that celebrates the land, the heritage, the people and the produce. Running from March to December, events range from guided food tours to weekend farm retreats and from themed events to street feasts. www.boynevalleyflavours.ie



TASTE CORK

Taste Cork, the network of artisan food producers, Cork-based food and drink producers, independent specialist retailers, cafés, delis, hotels and restaurants, has a strong belief in using locally-sourced ingredients. Its Taste Tours bring visitors right into Cork's deep food culture, and include meeting producers, experiencing the craft, joining in the making and bringing home samples of Cork's best from its shops and stores. Options include Craft Beer, Brewery and Distillery Tours, Artisan Cheese Tours, Smokehouse Tours, Farm Visits and Tasting Trails. www.tastecork.com



WILD FOOD MARY FORAGING TOURS

Wild Food Mary Foraging Tours connect visitors to places and heritage through exploring, observing and using wild plants. Mary leads a day tour of wild food foraging near her home in County Offaly or at Crann Og Eco Farm in County Galway. The day includes tuition, guided foraging walk, a tasty meal incorporating foraged foods and other natural and organic ingredient, refreshments, good company and great fun. Her Wild Damson and Wild Beech Leaf liqueurs are also available to buy and take home after the visit. www.wildfoodmary.com



BURREN SLOW FOOD FESTIVAL

May is when the Burren Slow Food Festival takes place, and with its coastal location in County Clare, the theme for 2019 is "Taste the Atlantic – Seaweed". Events will include talks and cookery demos, getting to know small producers and their products, and tasting wonderful samples of what the sea and the Irish soil have to offer. Highlights include a trip to Inis Oirr, the smallest of the Aran Islands, for a seafood dinner; an Artisan Food Producers' and Farmers' Market; a pop-up café and the traditional Burren Slow Food Banquet. www.slowfoodclare.com/festival



FOOD TOURS AND FORAGING EXPERIENCES

Holiday highlights are created when the visitor takes an active role in the experience, and food tours and foraging really deliver in this experience. While the expert or the tour leader is often into food, they must also create and tell a memorable story.

URBAN TOURS

Each stop is a chapter, like a chapter of the tour's overall story, a good relationship between the tour leader and the various stops will permeate across the visitor experience.

- Make it an experience: include sensory elements – opportunities to taste, touch, smell etc.
- Also, visitors love to have a go at trying out something new – make it immersive.
- Not too serious: although the main interest is the food, enjoyment is also a primary motivator.

FORAGING EXPERIENCES

Immersive exploration at its best, triggering all the senses as your visitors explore and taste the hedgerows, by-roads, green fields and shorelines.

- Story: tell the story of our ancestral cuisine, our survival instincts and traditions, our wild food.
- Taste: incorporate a picnic made from locally foraged produce.
- Added value or additional revenue stream: create a reference book of wild edibles as a take-away or write a recipe book based on wild ingredients.



Festivals and Events

Food and drink can play a starring role in delivering great festivals and events. And that's not just where food and drink is the main theme but across the wider spectrum of festivals and events.

Whether you want to enhance the food and drink offering at a festival that's taking place during Taste the Island or you're creating a brand-new food and drink-themed event, the possibilities are endless and the demand from customers is growing.

Attend one of the Taste the Island industry workshops to start the ideas flowing or to set your plans in motion.

FOCUS ON

POP UPS AND KITCHEN TAKEOVERS

Particularly in unusual venues. Of course, this involves a keen focus on logistics and planning, but it can deliver a wonderful experience in an atmospheric venue. Remember that customers want unique experiences and are happy to pay more for a unusual event that creates brilliant memories.

TOURS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Give visitors the chance to watch chefs at work and to learn about the ingredients, processes and skills involved. They are particularly powerful when they engage the senses – not just sight but sound, smell, touch and taste – and when they use a storytelling style to connect with visitors. This means a chef/cook who doesn't simply deliver a dry script but brings it to life.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY FOOD EXPERIENCES

Food can play a central role in all types of festivals – arts, literature, wellness, adventure. If you're a festival organiser or festival committee whose expertise lies in areas other than food, don't worry. Just link in with your local restaurant or food producer to explore how you can work together to bring food centre stage. Your festival audience will thank you for it.



MURPHY'S ICE CREAM

"Ice cream that knows where it's coming from" is the approach at Murphy's Ice Cream. Preferring the real thing to colourings, flavourings, or powdered milk, ingredients include fresh-from-the-farm milk, local cream, free range eggs, and organic sugar. They even make their own sea salt from Dingle sea water. The approach is obviously working – having started life in 2000 in Dingle, locations now include Killarney, Dublin and Galway. www.murphysicecream.ie



WATERFORD HARVEST FESTIVAL

Having celebrated 10 years since its foundation, the Waterford Harvest Festival has been described by John McKenna as a "Benchmark Irish Food Festival". Taking place each September, the festival honours the food, producers and chefs of the region and the programme includes free events, family events and after dark events including demonstrations, masterclasses, taste trails, wellness events, pop-up restaurants and entertainment. www.waterfordharvestfestival.ie



DINGLE FOOD FESTIVAL

Taking place on the first weekend in October every year, locals call the Dingle Food Festival 'The Best Weekend of the Year'. Taking place in Dingle, County Kerry the most popular part of the festival is 'The Taste Trail' where visitors can visit over 70 venues around the town offering tastings of the best food and drink the Dingle Peninsula has to offer. Other highlights include cookery demonstrations, market stalls, workshops, street entertainment and children's events. The organisers aim to make the festival waste free by 2020. www.dinglefood.com

EVENT SUGGESTIONS CONTINUED

MAKE IT EXCLUSIVE

Intimate and exclusive events such as surprise chef demos or tasting menus that are only revealed on the night create an excitement and a buzz for certain customer segments. The more exclusive, the more special the customer will feel. The more exclusive, the higher the value placed on the event.

LEARNING LUNCHES

Lunches with informative guest speakers on health, environment, or cooking demos.

LONG-TABLE DINING

Social dining, arising from the sharing economy. It's about the food and the drink, but it's also about the fun and the interaction.

USE UNIQUE AND FANTASTIC INGREDIENTS

One of the best ways to set your food event apart is with special ingredients you can't find just anywhere. Think a pre-release of a product that's about to become hot, or a rare, foraged seaweed etc.

GOODY BAG FOR CONFERENCE GUESTS

If you're organising a conference during Taste the Island, include a local food product in your goody bag.

CONFERENCE ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMME

If there's an entertainment programme for conference delegates, consider a visit a local food producer or arrange a talk/demo from a local chef.

FOOD AND ADVENTURE/WELLNESS PAIRING

Whether on holiday or not, people who actively look after their health like to make good choices on what they eat and drink, and on how much exercise they take. There is a growing interest in combining food with adventure/wellness for short breaks.



CREATING AND SHARING

4

Creating and sharing your food and drink story!

Key to great storytelling and effective promotion is having a clear, well-defined and consistent food or drink story. Keeping it short and to the point is best.

The three values are that are most important when it comes to telling your story are:

AUTHENTICITY

Real, genuine stories that are not contrived.

INTEGRITY

Honesty and transparency is key.

CREDIBILITY

Trustworthy as a reliable source.

Today's consumers don't want to feel they're being sold to. These three values will always encourage content that connects. Content is king, it is predicated that in less than 2 years, 80% of internet traffic will be video.

Once you've identified your story, the list of places where you can use it is endless. They include your farm or boat, at your workshop or production site, on your website, on social media, on your menus, on your chalk boards, at farmers markets, during special events and so on.

Social media offers a brilliant opportunity for you to create and add to your business brand personality online. An active presence, paired with excellent content and a captivated audience can increase awareness and attract new customers. With billions of active users across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube there is no better medium to reach a target audience.

Where can I source imagery?

Ireland's Content Pool has high quality, free, downloadable food and drink images
www.irelandscontentpool.com

Promoting your food and drink experience

- Complete the relevant participation form to feature in the Taste the Island programme.
- Collaborate with local tourism businesses (accommodation, visitor attractions etc). Let them know what you're doing for Taste the Island and jointly promote the offering.
- Often, the impact of front of house personnel as key expressions of a businesses food ethos is underestimated. Ensure your staff know your food and drink story and enthusiastically play their role in it.
- Ensure your website has a dedicated section for events and visitor offerings that can be easily found from the home page.
- Tag your website with search friendly terms – Taste the Island, Irish food, trail, foraging, farm visit, food festival, etc.
- Invest in high quality imagery and short video clips on your website and social media.
- Consider driving sales of specific events through social media channels.
- Send an invite to past customers to visit again.
- Make it easy for the visitor to find and contact you – 'Contact Us' details prominent, respond to messages etc.
- Focus on making your offering saleable online ie. easy for a customer to book.
- Let your tour operator partners know about new food experiences – it may not result in additional sales this year but could influence buying decisions for 2020 and beyond.
- If you work with Online Travel Agents (OTA) or other online platforms such as Airbnb consider promoting your experience on those channels to drive sales.



TASTE THE ISLAND
TOOLKIT

TASTE THE ISLAND

Event Timeline



TASTE THE ISLAND

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER - NOVEMBER

ONGOING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR
COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS, SUPPORT FROM DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES, ETC.

TASTE THE ISLAND
TOOLKIT

Over to you

HOW TO SHARE YOUR BRILLIANT PLANS

Here's a few ways to engage more closely with **Fáilte Ireland** and **Tourism Ireland** and get your plans out there and into the world....

Get listed

If you are delivering an experience to visitors, make sure we know about it! Be sure to get listed across our consumer sites or if you are already listed find out how you can make the most of your listing here:

www.failteireland.ie/get-listed

Be part of the Taste the Island programme

If you'd like to be included on our Taste the Island event and promotions calender, simply fill in our experience and event form here:

<https://www.failteirelandevents.ie/#/>

Get registered

If you want to be informed of and receive information on trade events, enterprise supports and funding opportunities register on our trade portal:

<https://tradeportal.failteireland.ie/>

Tourism Ireland industry opportunities

Submit details of your Taste the Island experiences and events to 'Have you got a story to tell?' and upload experiential offers at:

www.tourismirelandindustryopportunities.com

Get social

Join in the conversation on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and share your updates using **#TastetheIsland**. From chats to photographs and videos, find all the latest news on our website and social channels.

Get uploading and downloading

Pay a visit to Ireland's content pool, a centralised online library of free promotional images, video copy and other marketing assets. Download the content to improve your digital presence and upload your own quality imagery and video for feature across promotions.

www.irelandscontentpool.com

Keep updated

As Taste the Island evolves, so too will the updates. Keep an eye on www.failteireland.ie/tastetheisland for project information.

Talk to us about business supports

There are plenty of training supports available to businesses who want to improve and grow in tourism. Swing by www.failteireland.ie/supports for more information.

Contact the team at:

tastetheisland@failteireland.ie

Meet the Team

MANAGEMENT TEAM — TASTE THE ISLAND



Paul Keeley
Director of Business Development



Martina Bromley
Head of Enterprise and Hospitality Development



Tracey Coughlan
Manager Food Tourism, Strategy and Programme

FOOD TOURISM IRELAND



Aimee Graham
Food Tourism Project Support
aimee.graham@failteireland.ie



Sinéad Hennessy
Food Tourism Officer
sinead.hennessy@failteireland.ie



PJ Hartnett
Food Tourism Executive
patrickj.hartnett@failteireland.ie



Caitríona Fitzpatrick
Communications and Stakeholders Manager — Taste the Island
caitrona.fitzpatrick@failteireland.ie

REGIONAL TEAM CONTACTS



Sarah McCarthy
Programme Officer
sarah.mccarthy@failteireland.ie



Marie Healy
Projects Officer
marie.healy@failteireland.ie



Fiona Moore
Projects Officer
fiona.moore@failteireland.ie



Maria Christie
Projects Co-Ordinator
maria.christie@failteireland.ie



Gary Quate
Experiences Development Officer
Tourism Northern Ireland
g.quate@tourismni.com



Taste the Island

IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

The all island implementation group consists of members from Fáilte Ireland's core Food Tourism Team, Regional Programme Teams and representatives from business units across the organisation.

Tourism Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland are also represented on the group which meets every week to execute this ambitious project.



Sarah Dee, Sarah Fisher, Amanda Horan, Caoimhe Ní Dhuibhinn, Maeve McKeever, Kevin Quinn, Dean Panter, Orla Canavan, Laoise Donnelly, Martin Donnelly, Laura Hanley, Eva Dearie, Deirdre Byrne, Catherine Whelan, Azeta Seery, Rosaleen Fitzpatrick.

Tourism Ireland

tourismireland.com

Tourism Northern Ireland

tourismni.com

Fáilte Ireland

failteireland.ie

Wild Atlantic Way

wildatlanticway.com

Ireland's Hidden Heartlands

irelandshiddenheartlands.discoverireland.ie

Ireland's Ancient East

irelandsancienteast.com

Dublin

visitdublin.com

Discover Ireland

discoverireland.ie

Discover Northern Ireland

discovernorthernireland.com

