

Marketing and Promotion of Common Regional Culinary Tourism Products

Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



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RESILIENT ECONOMIES AND COMMUNITIES

BASCIL

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Chapter 1

How To Create A Common Food Travel Ecosystem

In many destinations worldwide, food tourism has gained significant popularity, with a large number of travellers expressing interest in exploring local cuisine and culinary experiences. Food experiences have shifted from a secondary role in the travel industry to becoming a central focus.

Food experiences were once seen as supplementary to other travel activities such as sightseeing or museum visits. Today, they have become one of the primary motivations for travel planning.

Various studies and surveys estimate that a significant percentage of tourists, ranging from 30% to 70% or more, depending on the destination, prioritise food experiences in their travel itineraries. However, these figures can vary and may not be consistent across all destinations.

Interestingly, more tourists are now booking their travel experiences, including food tourism activities, even before securing airline tickets or accommodation.

The growing interest in culinary tourism can be attributed to factors like the rise of food-focused media, including television shows and social media platforms. Additionally, travellers are increasingly adventurous in their dining preferences, seeking authentic and immersive food experiences that reflect the local culture and traditions of their destination.

Overall, while exact figures are difficult to determine, it is clear that a significant portion of tourists show a strong interest in food experiences during their travels.

According to the latest survey by the World Food Travel Association, over 50% of leisure tourists express interest in food travel experiences. The fact is that tourists often choose destinations based on opportunities to sample local cuisine. If your destination is known for its original and authentic flavours, it can stand out in the competitive tourism market. We can more easily attract visitors with a well-defined food tourism identity and consistent communication.

No single provider of food tourism experiences can independently build a destination's widely recognised image. However, partners can collaborate to create a unified offering and promotion that acts as a magnet for tourists and residents alike. We will guide you through the process of building common tools to efficiently and sustainably combine individual food tourism offers.

Who should work together to create an efficient food tourism ecosystem?

Only the unification of all stakeholders from the areas of tourism, agriculture and food production, promotion of the place brand, the restaurant sector and their cooperation, with understanding of mutual needs, will provide the foundation for building an effective platform for the promotion and communication of tourist offers through the region's brand.

Ideally, the local government supports such projects organisationally and financially. However, this may depend on the level of awareness of local authorities and offices. It is not always possible to involve them in the process from the beginning. However, it is always worth informing about the willingness to act and cooperate. As a sector generating high added value, culinary tourism has a chance to develop only when most of the indicated sectors are united by the will to cooperate.

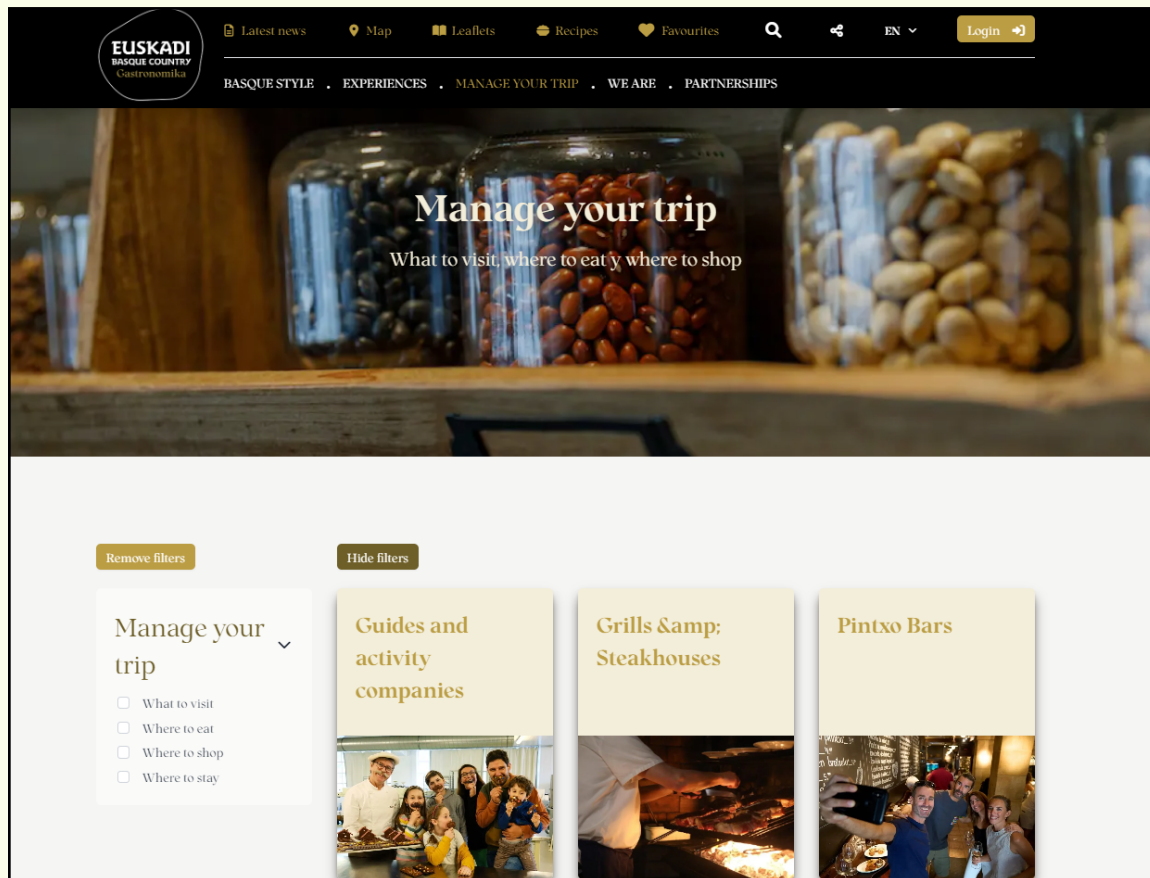


Figure: Creating a complex food travel ecosystem, (landbrand 2024)

A good model for networking cooperation in the European Union are third sector organisations, NGOs, e.g. associations of restaurateurs, farmers and agricultural producers, organisations or companies owned by the local government and, of course, operating in various forms, Destination Management Organisation. It is not the form of organisation,

but a common goal and the high quality of the offers as well as the guarantee of their local origin that determine the common, long-term success of cooperation in culinary tourism.

Good examples of cooperation that has brought measurable results



Euskadi – Basque Country Gastronomika

This is a network promoted by the Basque Government's Department of Trade, Consumer Affairs and Tourism and the Basque Tourism Agency, Basquetour, with the aim of articulating and guaranteeing the authenticity and excellence of the Basque Country's gastronomic tourism. It consists of more than 730 companies of different typology: visitable agri-food

industries and producers, activity companies, food tour guides and agencies, gastronomic accommodation, restaurants, markets and specialist shops. All of them with a common denominator: a commitment to local produce and Basque gastronomic culture to provide tourists with a truly complete and comprehensive offer to enable a rich and authentic gastronomic experience. Thanks to the network's activities, tourists can understand the uniqueness of Basque cuisine and culinary culture. What more, they can get to know and book almost 40 engaging tourist experiences online, such as: visiting museums of taste, tasting local snacks, and visits to cider houses.

They can also choose to visit places with a guarantee of local quality, style and taste in categories such as:

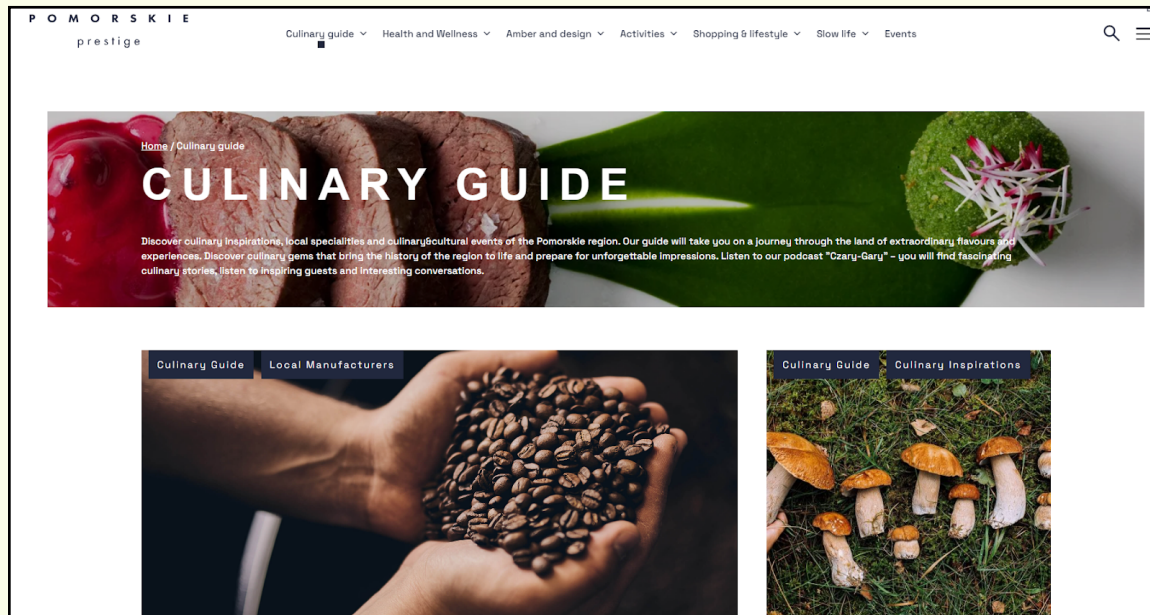
What to visit?

Where to eat?

Where to shop?

Where to stay?

By using the homepage food tourists can also get to know and book online almost 40 engaging tourist experiences such as: Guides and activity companies, Pintxo (tapas) Bars, Grill & Steakhouses, Cider cellars, Rioja Alavesa wine cellars, Txakoli wine cellars or Gourmet farmhouses.

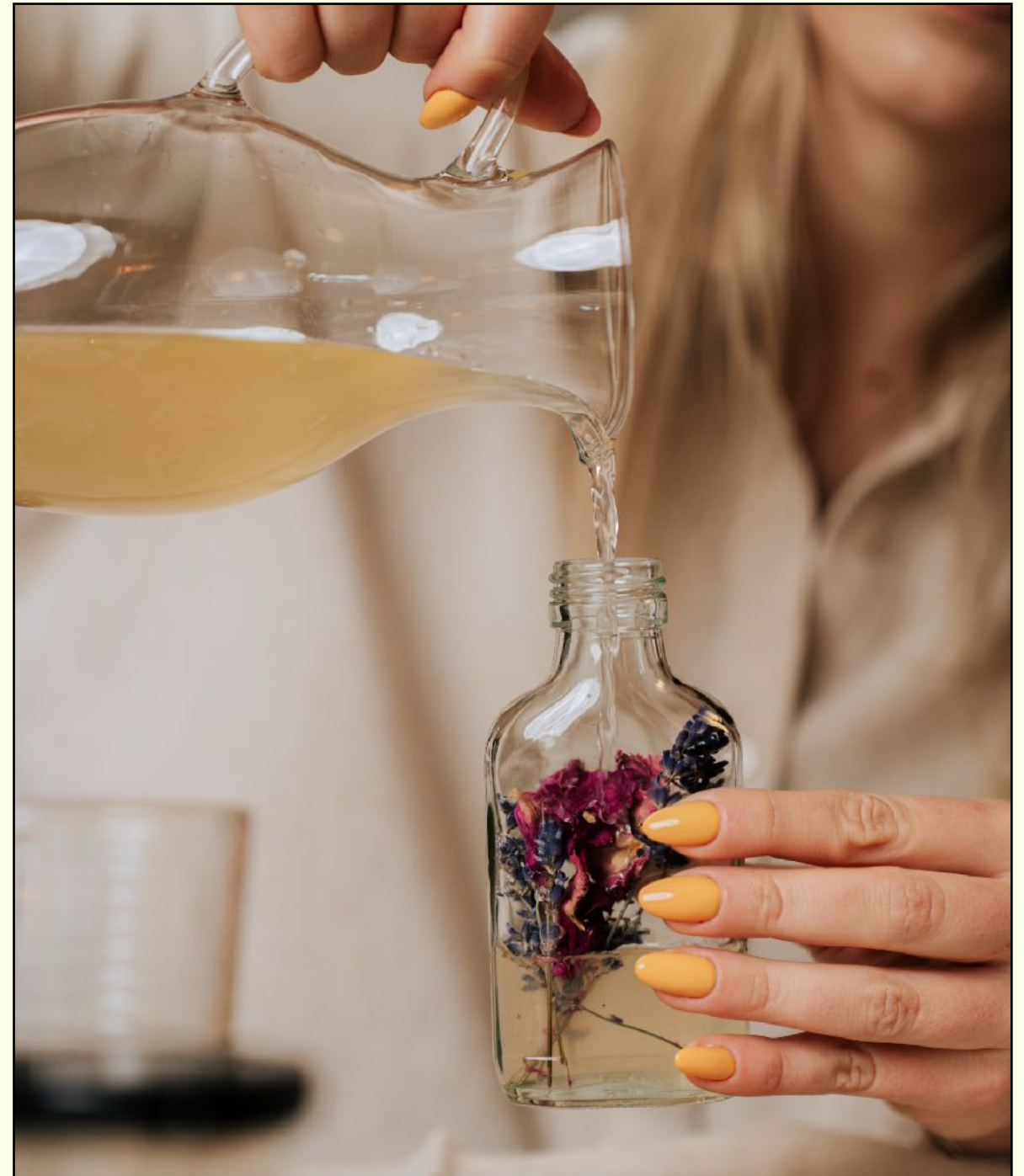


Pomorskie Culinary Prestige

A network of cooperation between restaurateurs, cheesemakers, brewers and other food producers in the tourist region of Pomerania in Poland, which has been operating for over 10 years. The operator of the network and the brand is the Pomeranian Tourist Board (PTB), which began to create a selection of experiences recommended as typical and worth seeing in its region from the culinary offer.

Currently, the project assumes close paid cooperation with entities willing to benefit from tangible training and promotional support. Under the project, cooperating restaurants and producers receive the title of project partner in exchange for an annual membership fee. This is related, among other things, to the opportunity to participate in training devoted to new trends and tools for the promotion of culinary tourism, PR and promotional support, and a distinguished

presentation in all media conducted as part of Pomorskie Prestige and cooperating with PTB. The project has its own social media, a culinary podcast, selections of regional restaurants, a culinary guide and is integrated with a shop that allows you to get acquainted with and buy culinary tourism experiences.





Chapter 2

Development Of A Food Travel Destination

A food tour can be defined as a collection of food travel experiences organised and offered as a cohesive package in the market. Culinary tourism is a popular travel theme and one of the most common activities during tourist trips. However, it is usually one of several key activities, often complementing a broader itinerary that may include visits to monuments and museums, sunbathing, shopping, or outdoor activities. As a result, tourists typically seek out individual culinary tourism experiences, such as participating in cooking workshops or guided visits to a farm, dairy, or distillery. This is perfectly fine and should be taken into account when planning.

Of course, there are individuals and groups of tourists who are particularly interested in exploring the culinary flavours of different regions. When developing complex culinary tourism offerings, it is essential to target this niche group focused on experiencing local cuisine. Keep in mind that the Baltic Sea Region is not yet recognised as a top food destination.

Therefore, we should avoid working in isolation and always consider the broader context.

A realistic scenario is that food tourism will initially serve as an additional experience alongside cultural and active tourism. Over time, it may become an equal component in package travel offers. Eventually, it could evolve into a standalone travel theme, as seen in regions like the Basque Country in Spain, Tuscany in Italy, or Provence in France. This progression will also lead to the emergence of food travel agencies actively operating in the market.





Figure: The share of culinary tourism experiences in tourist packages depending on the level of development of culinary tourism destinations.

There are various ways to group food tours. To understand the different variables to consider when creating tourism offers, it is helpful to answer the following questions.

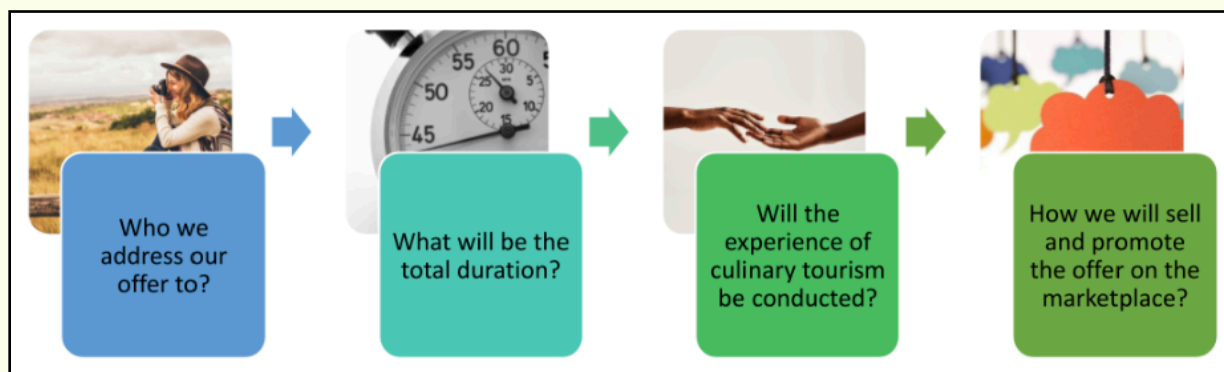


Figure: Key questions to answer before composing a food travel offer.

☀ Recipient

When considering the target audience, we can distinguish between local and regional tourists who are interested in the region's culinary heritage and are eager to experience authentic food and learn about the production processes.

These tourists enjoy visiting farms, wineries, or distilleries as part of a weekend getaway. Domestic travellers, eager to explore regional culinary differences, might spend 2-3 days enjoying various restaurants, farmhouses, food museums, and tastings. They may also be interested in participating in food travel experiences as a stopover during longer journeys, for example, when travelling from the capital to a coastal or mountainous region. In such cases, they might choose a local tavern or farm tour as a break and refreshment.

International tourists, whether travelling cross-border or from another continent, often seek to understand a place through its flavours and dining traditions. They are typically interested in experiencing the region's culture, as well as its key natural and cultural attractions. Trips focused on food tourism during special events, such as festivals and culinary gatherings, will be particularly appealing to them.

☼ Duration

Due to the length of such products, we can divide them into two basic categories: offers lasting up to one day and multi-day offers including accommodation.

In the first case a self-guided or guided walk through the district when tourists are visiting different venues and experiencing i.e. different types of wines, liquors, vodkas or food samples get more and more popular. It can also be applied in rural areas assuming that we combine 2-3 attractions of food tourism into one offer. These can be, for example, guided tours of a distillery or cheese factory in one location and participation in a culinary workshop, e.g. from baking bread in another place.

However, special attention should be paid to the fact that the places are not more than about an hour's drive from each other. Of course, they can also be connected in other ways, e.g. through a bicycle or canoe trail, which creates even more opportunities to create a well-selling market offer, as the popularity of the combination of active and culinary tourism is growing.

One-day offers can be sold through on-line booking portals or directly by the hosts of the offer or tourist organisations and associations or gathering farmers, processors and restaurateurs. Longer stays that include accommodation are mainly sold by the tour operators or travel agencies.

They are most likely addressed to international tourists.

However, it happens more and more often that agri-tourism farms, guesthouses and hotels organise stays with culinary tourism attractions for their guests. Please remember that in many countries, if you want to offer multi-day tourist trips, you need a special licence obtained from the public authorities and insurance guarantees.

☼ Conduct

The offers can also be differentiated according to the way of sightseeing - then we can talk about self-guided tours and guided tours. In the case of self-guided tours they do not include accommodation, these separate transactions and bookings most often take place via online platforms. During one-day offers and independent sightseeing, the tourist purchases services on his own and travels according to the presented scenario or route, getting to know the traditions and the offer of culinary experiences of the region.

Self-guided tours can last up to several days. These tours will have the character of recommendations, which will result in details of the trip and descriptions of places. They will often contain maps and links to the attractions websites. Usually, there will be descriptions of sample routes and activities to visit. Most often they can be found on the websites of destination management organisations (DMO).

Guided tours may of course also last several hours or several days. Sometimes they can be booked as guided tours using popular booking platforms or DMO websites. However, in the case of those lasting several days, which include a tour guide, it is necessary to purchase it by a travel agent or tour operator.

In the case of longer guided trips they usually consist of combined tourist services including tour guide's care but accommodation, transportation, insurance, breakfast, lunches, dinners, food degustations and workshops which are the key drivers of the trip.

✻ **Selling Method**

The complex experience of culinary tourism can either have the character of a free recommendation, when the tourist on his own, often on the spot, purchases individual services. It can also be accessed through online booking on one of the popular travel experience booking platforms. This method is currently gaining more and more popularity.

That is why we will devote more attention to the analysis of the possibilities it offers. The tourist then buys a selected number of tourist experiences of various kinds available at the destination. Online platforms give the opportunity to buy meals at home, cooking workshops combined with shopping at markets, visiting food producers, tasting and farm visits. Online platforms give the visitor the possibility to read the descriptions with catchy

titles, photos, check availability dates, reviews of other guests and book with online payment using a credit card or other online payment methods.

The third common method is to sell a ready-made package containing a well-known destination of tourism in the world. Such a trip is usually a guarantee of the highest quality experience. Tour operators choose experiences that are previously proven and offer unique but standardised quality aimed towards international tourists.

Usually, the tour program is perfectly described, including photos and recommendations of tourists who have previously decided to buy it. Reservations are made in advance, payment can be made in tranches. Such offers are available in both European and American travel agencies, and the market for them is still growing. Sometimes operators specialise only in culinary tourism, although more often they are organised by travel agencies with a broader specialisation.



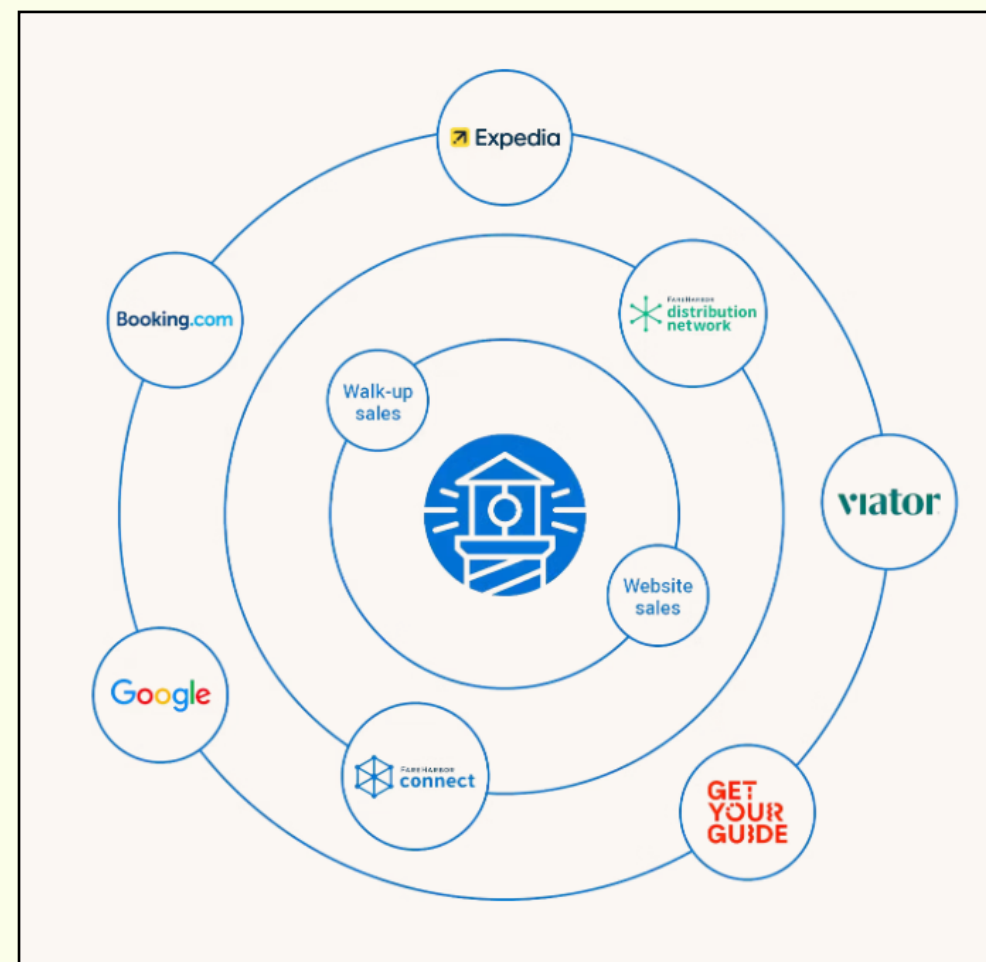
Chapter 3

Complex Culinary Tourism Offers On Online Platforms

The most popular market platforms include booking sites like booking.com, viator.com (owned by TripAdvisor), getyourguide.com (a popular portal for booking tourist activities), travellingspoon.com (a platform focused on booking cooking classes, private meals, and market visits), and eatwith.com (offering similar services as Travelling Spoon).

Other market solutions include booking platforms integrated with the websites of local and regional tourist organisations and associations that network culinary tourism entities. They often utilise ready-made booking engines embedded into their websites, such as FareHarbor. This solution allows for the professional display and sale of offers. An additional benefit of partnering with a provider like FareHarbor is the ability to feature affiliate offers across global sales channels operated by OTAs (Online Travel Agencies) like booking.com, Expedia, Musement, Viator, GetYourGuide, and others.

This service provider recognises the opportunity to collaborate with rural culinary tourism attractions and offers dedicated packages for farm-based experiences.





Chapter 4

Food Tourism Offers Sold By Travel Agencies

For group-oriented offers and multi-day packages, it is advisable to collaborate with professional travel agencies specialising in culinary tourism. Generally, their approach focuses on making these offers accessible to tourists from distant markets, often located in third countries. They typically curate a selection of internationally appealing culinary attractions from a specific region or country and offer ready-made packages to travellers in their home market.

There are numerous travel agencies worldwide that organise culinary trips. For many, taste-driven journeys are one of the central themes of their experience offerings. There are also travel agencies that specialise exclusively in culinary tourism.

The Baltic Sea region is not yet widely recognised as a popular destination among global food tourism agencies. However, understanding this market and taking steps to position the Baltic Sea region within the culinary tourism landscape is worthwhile. Below we present the leaders of the organised

culinary tourism market, briefly describing the characteristics of the agency and its sample offers. The information collected below can help you understand the necessary elements of offers and start working with experienced culinary travel operators.

Most group trips accommodate between 12 and 45 participants. The average cost for a 7-day stay is around 3,000 USD or more, while for longer trips of 10-12 days, especially those in smaller groups, prices can reach up to 5,500 USD. This price typically includes accommodation, entry to attractions, breakfasts, most meals, coach transport, airport transfers, and luggage handling. It does not include pre- and post-tour airfare, optional activities, or certain meals.

A brief description of the Travel Agency activity	Sample food tours, price, group size
<p>Trafalgar https://www.trafalgar.com/en-eu/ways-to-go/food-travel A global operator, located in Normandy, France. Part of The Travel Corporation group. It offers a variety of tours to 72 countries. Some of them are marked as culinary trips. Here are some examples: California Coast Food and Wine Trail, a seven-day trip that focuses on locally made cheese, award-winning olive oil, and, of course, wine. Tastes and Sounds of the South, a 10-day tour on which you can sample everything from Creole cuisine to hot chicken. German Christmas markets trip, the Paris Explorer tour, and the Georgia and Armenia Uncovered.</p>	<p>8 Day Greece Tour of Athens, Olympia, Delphi and Meteora. As part of the trip one can connect With Locals joining the Karambellas family for dinner on their olive and wine farm at a Be My Guest experience featuring traditional dancing and characteristic Greek philoxenia. Greek cooking lesson; try your hand at preparing various famous local dishes under the expert direction of your warm and hospitable chef and hosts. Afterwards relax in the lovely surroundings and enjoy a scrumptious dinner including the dishes you have prepared.</p>
<p>EF Go Ahead Tours https://www.goaheadtours.com/guided-tours/food-wine-barcelona-and-northern-spain The tour operator, which originates from Education First, a company that organises language courses, has significantly expanded its culinary travel offer in cooperation with America's Test Kitchen (ATK). Joint offers with ATK allow you to dive deeper into the cuisines of each region, with hands-on experiences and a look at the local food culture from sourcing to preparation to table. EF's distinguishing feature is the small groups of fall between 12 and 22 travellers. The offer includes dozens of different programs for visiting and tasting Europe. The offer includes, among others: Food & Wine: Flavours of Tuscany & Umbria / Campania / Puglia & the Amalfi Coast. Ireland: A Feast of Culinary Flavours & Local Tradition Belgium & Germany: Beers & Culinary Traditions.</p>	<p>Food & Wine: Barcelona & Northern Spain with America's Test Kitchen. The tour includes a 12-day trip with 10 nights and breakfasts, 6 beer/wine lunches, 3 wine or beer dinners, 3 wine tastings 1 liquor tasting, 1 cider tasting, 4 food tastings, 3 cooking classes, 8 sightseeing tours. Visiting Barcelona, San Sebastian, Bilbao, La Rioja. Price around \$5000.</p>

<p>Backroads https://www.backroads.com/award-winning-tours/active-culinary Backroads - the company specialises in combining active tourism with other forms, including culinary tourism. Active Culinary Tours allows one to experience a food-focused adventure in a savoury destination like Tuscany or Provence. A noteworthy trend is the preparation of offers for women and the division of offers into those based on casual and premium hotels. Activities that are combined with flavours are cycling, hiking and climbing.</p>	<p>Tuscany Active Culinary Walking & Hiking Tour. All breakfasts, 5 lunches, 4 dinners Special events, including wine tastings. On biking and multi-adventure trips, use of fully equipped titanium bike plus helmet and accessories Walk through brimming vineyards and in old-world villages Cook and delight in farm-to-table recipes passed down through generations. Hike the cypress-lined white roads of southern Tuscany and sip Chianti Classico in the region it originated. Relish handmade cuisine, from your first plate of pasta to your final bowl-scraping spoonful of tiramisu.</p>
<p>Eat Smart Culinary Travel https://www.eatsmartguides.com/poland.html A family travel agency and publishing house that has developed culinary guides and programs of trips along the routes of flavours to countries such as: Norway, Poland, Denmark, Jordan, Turkey and many others.</p>	<p>Currently, the agency does not sell trips to Poland, but presents their description on-line. The program includes, among others: Visiting restaurants in Krakow, Warsaw and Zakopane (lunch and dinner), visiting the bazaars: Hala Mirowska and BioBazar in Warsaw and Hala Targowa and Stary Kleparz in Krakow. farewell dinner at the Highlander Tradition in Zakopane. Guide supervision by the author of the culinary guide to Poland, Susan Peterson Chwae.</p>
<p>Polish Culinary Vacation https://polandculinaryvacations.com/ A tourist coming mainly from the USA. Mainly sentimental with Polish roots, in the first or second generation, but not only. The office was founded about 30 years ago by Małgosia Rose, who comes from Poland. Culinary tours are the main point of the agency's offer. In addition, there are also luxury trips to Poland and beyond. The offer, in addition to cooking, also includes boat trips in the Baltic Sea basin.</p>	<p>It consists of trips usually 7 days with 6 nights, although there are also 2-3 day stays. You can also choose the offer of workshops or a culinary walk around the city. Wine routes in Poland are also on sale. A sales hit is a trip from Krakow to Zakopane. The offer of Spa and Wine in southern Poland has appeared. A combination of sightseeing in Lower Silesia with Bolesławiec ceramics. From the regions, Mazovia, Greater Poland and Pomerania are represented. Occasional offers - Christmas - are also sold.</p>

Other reputable tour operators offering an extensive portfolio of culinary tourism include, for example:

Explore Worldwide - <https://www.exploreworldwide.com/experiences/food-drink-tours> . An interesting fact is the proposals of Culinary Journeys for vegetarians and vegans. The average group size is 11 people. US Issue Market.

Butterfield & Robinson - <https://www.butterfield.com/>. Luxury tour company Butterfield & Robinson is known for its high level of service and creative trip design. Its food and drink tours are no exception, with special itineraries that take you through renowned food and wine regions on foot or bike for unique culinary experiences. US Issue Market.

Wolff Travel International - <https://wolff-ostreisen.de/> . The office has been operating since 1958 and originates from a coach company. It offers culinary trips to Hungary, Austria and Slovenia. Its Warsaw branch offers several culinary trips around Poland, e.g. to Kazimierz on the Vistula or to Pomerania. Issue market Germany.

On the other hand, Travel agencies specialising in culinary tourism are, for example:

Gourmet on Tour - It specialises in the sale of cooking courses in cooking schools and tailor-made culinary experiences. They operate mainly in Italy and Spain. The average group size is 8 people. <https://gourmetontour.com/>

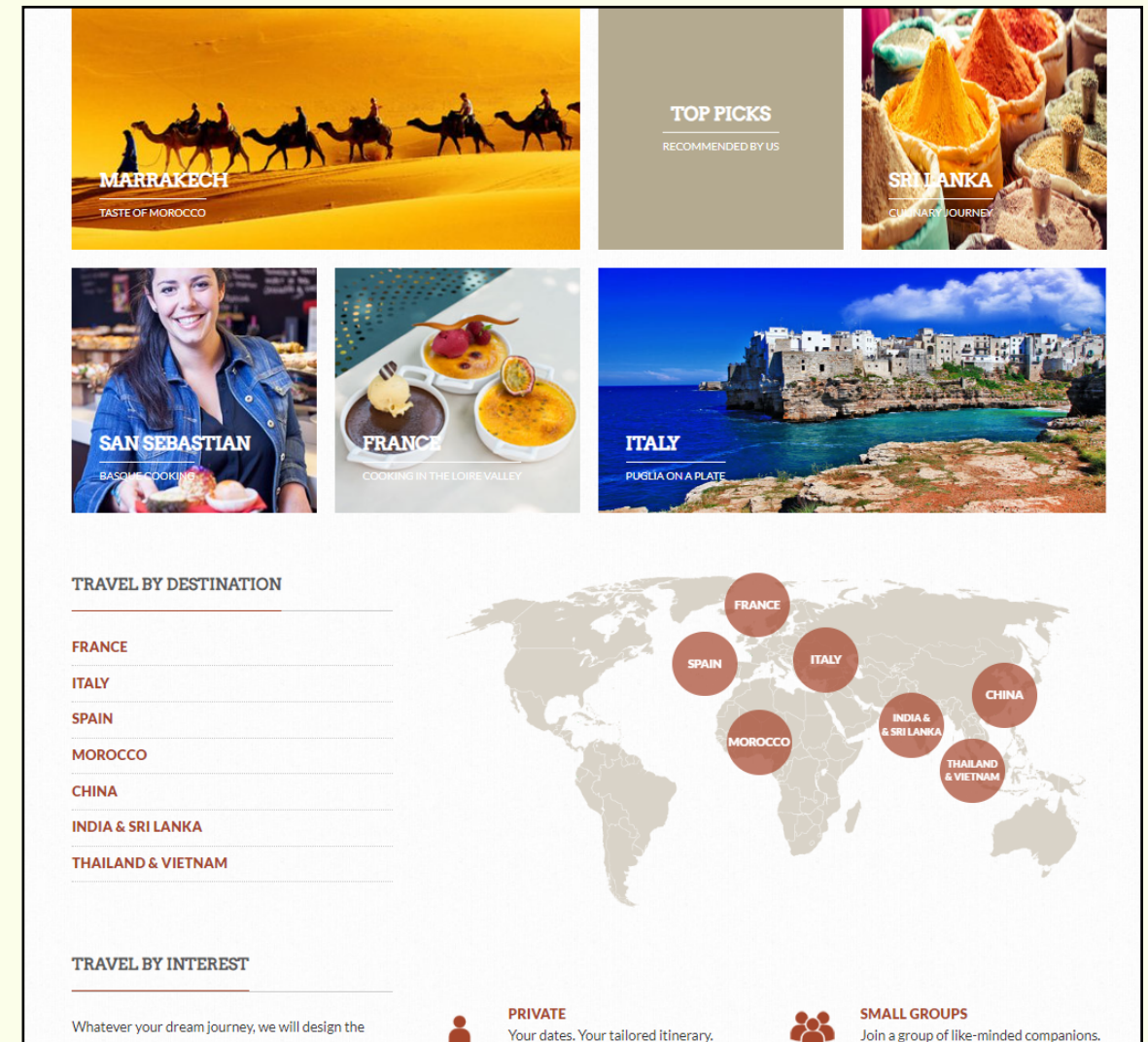


Figure: Food travel destinations offered by Gourmet on Tour

Global Gourmands - Founded in 2015 by Claudia Royston. The agency's philosophy is to work with local partners to build an experience that will be a part of tourists. Claudia knows Europe well, where she has lived. The offer is available in the variant - individual travel or groups of up to 16 people. So far, the agency has been active in destinations such as Morocco, Greece, Portugal, Northern Italy, Austria, Georgia, Armenia. <https://globalgourmands.com/>

As you can learn from the analysis of the offers of the above-mentioned tour operators, culinary tourism is rarely an independent motif around which the travel offer is composed.

It is most often combined with visiting the main cultural attractions, the so-called landmarks. It is also popular to pair it with active tourism, such as sightseeing from the level of a bike or trekking.

Europe is one of the leading destinations for culinary trips. Of course, offers from Italy and France are in the lead. Spain is also a popular destination. There are also offers from Germany, Belgium, Austria, Slovenia, Hungary and the Balkan countries.

The main emission market, to which the majority of culinary tourism offers are directed, is the USA. Most tour operators also come from there. At the moment, the direction of the Baltic Sea is not represented among the global market leaders. However, there are agencies specialising in culinary tourism, which offer selected countries located on the Baltic Sea.



Chapter 5

Culinary Tourism Itineraries For Independent Travellers

Independent travellers increasingly value flexibility. They prefer not to be restricted by a rigid schedule, which can be stressful, especially if they fall behind on planned activities. Instead, people prefer to travel at ease and enjoy the freedom of adapting the itinerary on the go.

They may opt for one or two scheduled activities, such as a cooking class or a meal, while leaving the rest of the day open for spontaneous decisions. Culinary tourism itineraries can be designed for self-driving as well as for hiking, cycling, skiing, or boating routes.



General steps in planning a culinary tour itinerary

- Make a list of culinary tourism sites in the area.
- Include in your list a wide range of sites, from well-known restaurants serving regional and local foods to home producers making local specialities.
- Gather detailed information about the culinary tourism experiences they offer.
- Comprehensive and accurate details will help create precise, reliable, and appealing descriptions that attract potential visitors and prevent misunderstandings.
- Group the sites according to their suitability for target audiences.
- Consider the capacities of the sites in terms of how many people they can accommodate (small/large groups), the languages in which the hosts can deliver their programmes,

and any cross-cultural issues that a particular site might not be able to address, etc.

- Mark the sites on a map.
- By locating the sites on a map, you will be able to estimate the distances between them, the time required for travelling, and the eventual visiting order.
- Group the sites by potential daily itinerary, with alternative options.
- Set up a proposed itinerary with the sites that are convenient to visit along the route in a logical order. If the density of sites is higher than can be visited in one trip, include them as options. If the distances between the sites involve long transfer times, see if you can include stopovers, such as visiting sites of general interest or "must-see" sites.
- Identify meal and accommodation options.
- While breakfast is typically included at overnight stays, consider options for lunch and dinner as well.
- Collect practical information that might be useful to travellers on tour.
- Practical information includes hints and advice regarding, for example, traffic and roads, seasonality, availability of meal service in guest houses, and any specific local conditions for which travellers might need to prepare.

- Find a local tour guide with a passion for culinary tourism who can offer engaging narratives about the itinerary and places to visit. A knowledgeable guide can be a crucial asset in promoting, selling, and conducting tours for tour operators or groups.

Tour packages for independent travellers

For travellers who prefer not to handle individual planning and reservations, tour packages with pre-arranged services - such as site visits, excursions, and accommodations - are the best option.

- Before arrival, customers receive: a personalised tour programme detailing booked dates, accommodations, and services, maps, descriptions of the sites, and other essential information.
- Tour packages for independent travellers often include small hotels and guesthouses with breakfast.
- If a guesthouse lacks a restaurant, evening meals can be included in the package. Additionally, lunch boxes can be arranged for guests.
- Tour packages may be self-drive or include transportation and guide services.


Example of a "Self-drive tour package" - Livonian Flavours

**GOURMET
TOURING ROUTES**

Livonian Flavours in the Kurzeme Region

DURATION: **3 days**
TRANSPORTATION: **Self-drive**
TOTAL LENGTH: **~ 545 km**


This route invites you to visit the Kurzeme region and try the traditional dishes there. The tour starts from Riga and takes you to some beautiful nature areas for a walk that will serve as physical exercise to build up an appetite. You will feast on traditional smoked fish at Dieniņas Fishermen's Yard, take a masterclass in baking "sklandrausis", a traditional carrot pie, visit fishing villages in Slitere National Park, and savour refined meals in Ventspils city pubs. Nice attractions en route are the steep coast of the Baltic Sea in Jūrkalne and the medieval town of Kuldīga. In a 19th century watermill, which nowadays is an organic farm, the hostess will give you a masterclass in cooking regional dishes from fallow deer, trout, vegetables and fruit. The last stop on the return back to Riga is the Chocolate Museum at Pūre.



ITINERARY:

LATVIA

RĪGA - ĶEMERI - BĒRZIŅI -
KOLKA - VENTSPILS - JŪRKALNE -
KULDĪGA - SABĪLE - KANDAVA - RĪGA



- 3 days.
- 2-6 visits per day.
- A variety of culinary experiences: coastal fishing and traditional recipes, a pastry cooking masterclass, a bread baking masterclass, and a game meat and fish cooking masterclass.
- Culinary visits mixed with general tourist attractions along the route.
- Culinary experiences are pre-arranged, while sights of general interest, such as nature trails and coastal villages, can be visited at your own pace.

Self-guided itineraries for independent travellers

Self-guided tours offer travellers the utmost flexibility, as the itineraries are adaptable to their interests, needs, and conditions. A structured self-guided itinerary description saves the time needed for independent planning. With this approach, travellers can estimate the amount of time they require for travel, visits, meals, and accommodations, and even change plans during a trip.

- Self-guided itineraries do not provide detailed travel instructions between locations as a tour package would.
- Travellers make their own plans and booking arrangements using a map with the route, marked sites, and a list of options for visits, meals, and accommodations.
- Travellers make their own choices and booking arrangements where needed or choose the sites with set opening hours where previous bookings are not necessary.
- Accommodations are typically recommended in small-scale or family-run establishments where travellers can experience personalised hospitality, homemade food, and regional traditions.

Self-Guided Itinerary Description Structure

The description can be structured into four parts: tour overview, map, itinerary with the choice of sites to visit

including options for meals, accommodation, and "must-see" sites of general interest, and useful contacts.

Tour Overview

- An interactive map showing the general location of the tour.
- Duration (in hours/half day/number of days).
- Key locations along the route, such as major cities.
- Mode of travel (e.g., car, hiking, cycling - indicated by a pictogram).
- A brief annotation describing the types of sites and tourist experiences included in the tour.
- Appealing photos

Map

An online map displays the itinerary with the locations of the sites to visit. A pop-up window for each site provides site information and a link. Online maps are most convenient, while in remote areas with poorer network coverage, printed maps may also come in handy.

Tour Itinerary

A description detailing distances per day, site locations and information, and options for accommodations and meals.

Practical information

Providing practical information is essential to prepare travellers for conditions and situations they might encounter. Each tour should include specific practical details for each day, such as:

- Total driving distance per day.
- The number of sites that can be realistically visited in a day.
- Details about visits, guided tours, and programs available only at certain times, requiring advance booking, cash payments, limited capacity, and other important information travellers should be aware of when planning their day.
- Links to opening hours and ticket information for the sites.
- Objects that can be viewed from outside only (such as production facilities or some general interest objects).
- Information about sights and attractions on the way such as nature trails, heritage sites, "must see" places, etc. Provide links for more information.
- Accessibility information for people with restrictions.

Optional list of sites to visit

Include several site options based on location, allowing each day's itinerary to feature 3-4 sites of the traveller's choice. It is noted that not all sites can be visited due to time and distance limitations. It should be clearly stated how many visits are

realistic per day, enabling travellers to make informed choices. Links are provided to site descriptions to aid travellers in making their choice and find information on the opening hours and ticket information of the sites.

- Places to eat.
In cities with a wide range of options, provide links to tourist information. In rural areas with limited choices, provide contacts for local information centres and/or a list of eating places with links and contact information.
- Places to stay.
In cities, provide links to tourist information. In rural areas, provide contacts for local information centres and/or a list of accommodations with links and contact information.
- Useful contacts
Contact details, such as those for local tourist information centres, where travellers can seek assistance during the tour.

Culinary Tourism Itineraries For Tour Operators

The primary distinction between itineraries for independent travellers and those for tour operators lies in the level of detail and precision of both, the description and delivery of services.

- Awareness of tour operator needs.
On one hand, tour operators want to sell well-tested products that ensure their safety. On the other hand, there is a growing trend towards unique and distinctive tourist experiences,

moving away from mass tourism. To collaborate with a tour operator, service providers will need to customise their offerings according to the requirements outlined by the tour operator. These specifications may vary based on several factors, such as the market targeted by the tour operator, cross-cultural disparities, the duration allocated for a specific visit within the tour operator's itinerary, and other considerations.

- Distances and visit durations.
For tour operator programmes, as well as for package tours, it is crucial to calculate precisely the travelling distances between places and the time required, as well as the time that will be spent at each site.
- Prompt communication.
The promptness of response to tour operator inquiries and requests is just as crucial as the accuracy of information provided by a service provider. Especially in the case of tailor made tour programmes, all arrangements should be communicated precisely to prevent misunderstandings. Additionally, a service provider should always be prepared for last-minute changes.
- Delivery as promised.
All services should be delivered precisely as promised to a tour operator. There should be no unexpected surprises, even if they are well-intentioned. A service provider must maintain good timing and execute the programme on-site as

agreed with the tour operator to ensure the entire tour stays on schedule.

- Reliability.

100% fulfilment of the agreement, Adherence to quality standards, Guarantee of contract prices, Adaptation to the client's budget.

Example: Stopover programme - culinary experience (a package) for tour operators en route "somewhere"

- Total duration: 4 hours.
- Precise technical information about travelling times, addresses with GPS coordinates, durations of visits.
- Information on seasonality, group size, and what is included in the price.
- Description of tourist experiences in the visiting programme.
- Description of the food style at the lunch place.
- Remarks about language skills of the hosts.



Chapter 6

Setting Up and Managing Food Trails

Tourist trails provide an opportunity to organise and focus collaboration among entities offering experiences under a shared theme or distinguishing feature. The key is to choose this distinguishing feature and ensure it is as authentic as possible for the area while remaining appealing to tourists. Popular themes for collaborative trails include wine, cider, whisky, and even moonshine. Another category of culinary routes is based on local raw materials, often featuring fruits like apples or plums. The third significant category of culinary routes is based on traditional cuisine and the culinary heritage of a particular area. These routes may be associated with a specific administrative, geographical, or historical region.

If your area does not yet have a culinary tourism trail and you are considering creating one, it's worth asking the following questions:

- ✿ Is there a local or regional culinary specialty?
- ✿ If so, can it be categorised under one of the following: craft spirit production, fruit cultivation, or regional culinary heritage?

- ✿ Are there at least five entities, such as restaurants, food producers, farmers, local delicatessens, or food museums, willing to collaborate within the trail?

If the answer to these questions is yes, it is worth proceeding to further activities creating a culinary tourism trail, which are described below.

1. Assemble a group of at least five rural neighbours who currently offer or wish to develop food experiences related to their rural lifestyle, agriculture, farming, or food processing. Potential food experiences include: tastings, pop-up restaurants and cafes, events and festivals related to seasonal products or agricultural activities, guided tours, workshops and cooking classes, food exhibitions, and museums dedicated to traditional products like bread. A combination of these experiences is possible and described in more detail in the first section of this manual.
2. Select a convenient meeting location, such as a grange hall, school, deli, or a neighbour's indoor space, which can serve as the heart of your trail. Ideally, you should also seek support from local government, Destination Marketing

Organizations, or other NGOs and conduct meetings in their venues.

3. Establish and collect a membership fee to cover basic financial needs, primarily related to joint marketing activities.
4. Prepare an essential marketing toolkit that will help establish your new initiative in the market. The key marketing tools and channels to consider initially include: developing a common logo and visual identity guide, creating a standardised graphic and content layout for promotional leaflets, establishing signs indicating trail affiliation, setting up a shared social media account, organising joint events (e.g., a dispersed event), and creating a unified calendar of activities and events.
5. Elect a trail coordinator and establish a team responsible for managing key activities and driving success.

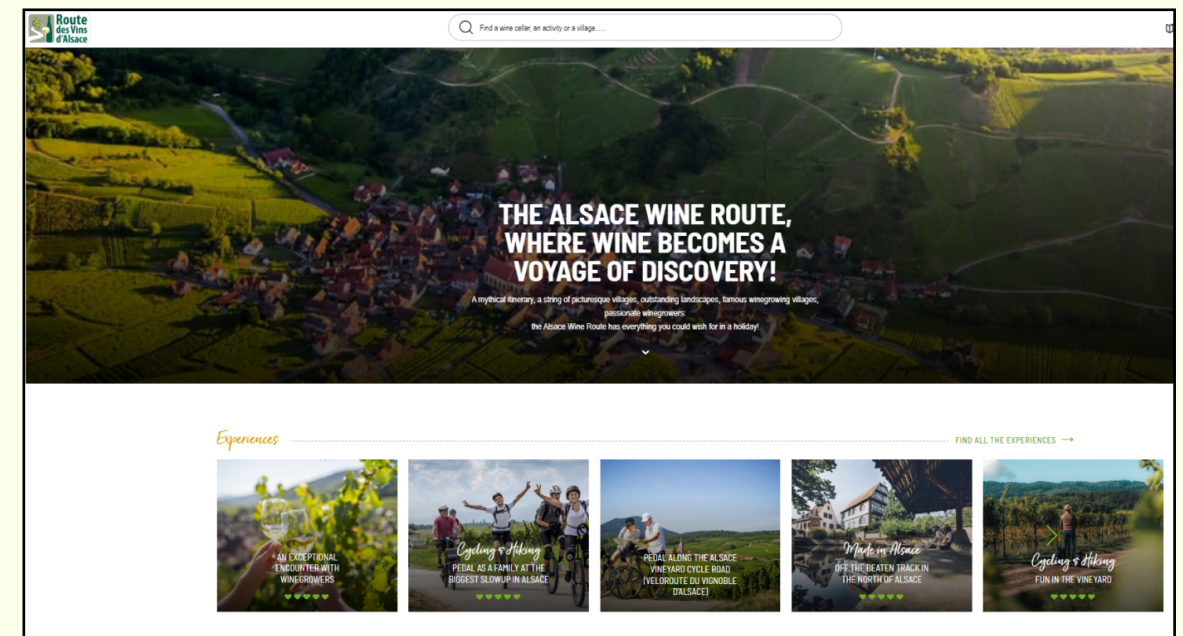
Alcohol Beverages Trails (Wine, Ciders, Beers, Distilleries)

This category is naturally intended for adult audiences. It's no surprise that the oldest and most recognisable trails of this type are found in places like France and Scotland. However, it's important to note that Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea region also have unique and fascinating stories to offer tourists in this regard. Potential themes for trails in this category can include both traditionally established beverages and production sites, such as mead, vodka, tinctures, and

moonshine, or newer ventures like wine and cider making in this region. It's worth drawing inspiration from the success stories and promotional strategies of well-established tourist trails in this category.



The Malt Whiskey Trail in Scotland <https://maltwhiskytrail.com/>

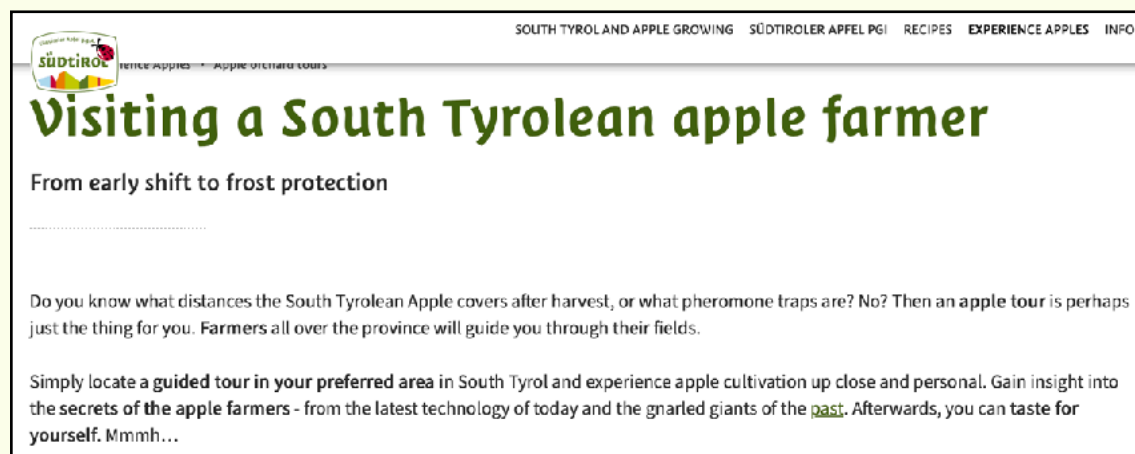


The Alsace Wine Route <https://www.wineroute.alsace/>

Orchard Trails (Apples and Plums)

The apple is arguably one of the best-marketed fruits in history, from its symbolic role in the Bible to its association with major tech companies. Unsurprisingly, it is also well-represented in the food tourism industry. A highly successful collaborative model was developed in Austria and Poland, focusing on tourism offerings centred around orchards and apple production and processing. These initiatives are based on local apple varieties that hold Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status.

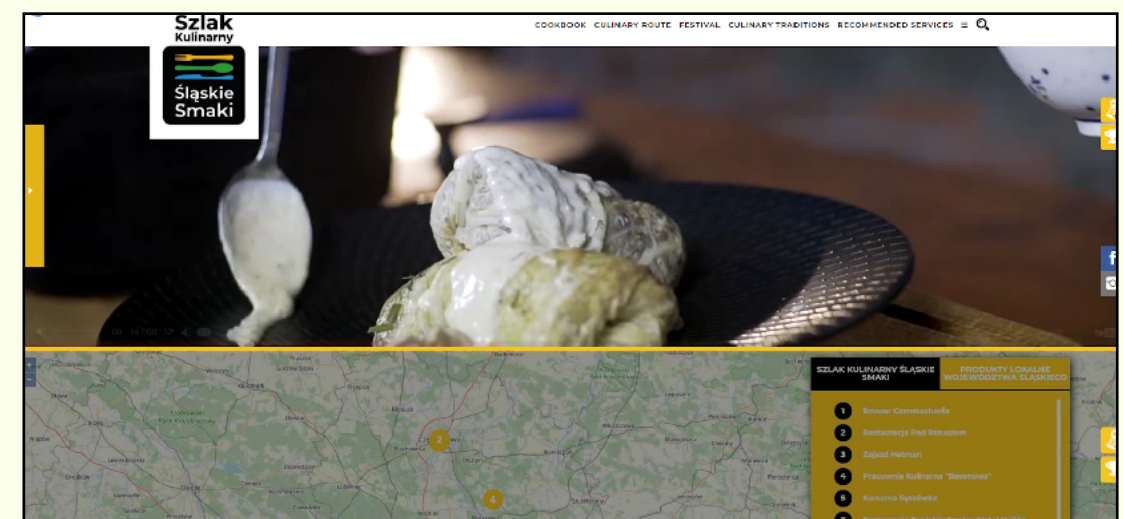
The South Tyrolean apple initiative consolidates marketing information related to local apple specialties, including recipes, cultivation methods, and a wide variety of apple orchard tours. It's a smart model where every apple arriving in shops and markets from Tyrol bears a branded sticker. This branding strategy has also been effectively adapted to the tourism market. Now, tourists can choose from dozens of guided tours through the orchards.



Traditional Cuisine Trails

Tradition, culinary heritage, and cuisine based on shared roots and locally produced dishes also provide a strong foundation for developing culinary routes. This foundation is particularly strong in regions that emphasise cultural distinctiveness expressed through local rituals, costumes, language, and, of course, culinary traditions. The culinary trails created on the basis of the above also have a somewhat easier start, because they address their offer both to tourists who want to get to know a different local specificity and to residents who are willing to maintain tradition.

For this reason, it's worthwhile to study trails that have already proven their value to both local and visiting audiences and to draw inspiration from their strategies. A good example is the culinary route established in Silesia, a large Polish region, home to four million people. This region is strongly characterised by its distinct culture, dialect, industry, and, of course, cuisine.





Chapter 7

Founding Longevity Of Common Actions

Regardless of the cooperation model chosen - whether you decide to work together on a trail, a joint offer for independent tourists, or prepare a package for a tour operator - it is crucial to ensure that your efforts in organising a complex culinary tourism offer do not go to waste and remain sustainable over multiple tourist seasons or years.

”Authenticity is the key to success. Finding hosts who have a passion for their activities, whether it is making cheese in a highlander hut or distilling craft vodkas is the basis of an interesting culinary experience and the best memories that tourists will take with them.”

Małgosia Rose - founder & owner of PolishCulinaryVacation

”Each participant of a joint venture, a trail, a culinary project or a festival should feel responsible for the initiative. Both in terms of the possibility of choosing the best marketing activities and their financing.”

Łukasz Magrian - Pomorskie Tourist Board director



”Sooner or later, supporting the local government will turn out to be necessary. The best initiatives are those that can count on understanding and cooperation with the local government or tourist organisations. This is an incredible convenience when a trail or culinary event can use, for example, urban spaces for outdoor promotion or social media run by regional tourist organisations.”

Hubert Gonera - creator of trails and culinary experiences

”A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Therefore, adopting common standards and guidelines concerning the quality and locality of activities, even in the form of flexible certification, is crucial to ensuring consistent service quality.”

Niclas Fjellström - Global Coordinator Culinary Heritage

”Understanding common goals and synergic effects among different partners that may constitute a food travel ecosystem is a foundation to long lasting and effective cooperation.

Restaurants, farmers, processors or local governments alone are not able to create a destination for culinary tourism. Only when cooperation begins and unhealthy competition ends, great things start to happen.”

Erik Wolf - World Food Travel Association director





SKEPPAR
VINGÅRD

Chapter 8

The Most Common Mistakes In Group Tour Planning

Before planning a culinary trip for an organised group, it's beneficial to be aware of common mistakes. Learning from others' errors can save you trouble. Here's a simple collection of tips to help guide food tourists from arrival to the end of a busy day. Remember, more isn't always better.

Arrival

- Do not begin the tour immediately after landing!
- Plan sufficient time for the group to rest and refresh at the hotel (about 1 hour is sufficient) after arriving from the airport.

Schedule

- Avoid scheduling long travel times between locations!
- A bus journey should be limited to 1-1.5 hours before planning a break or stopover.

Visits

- Don't schedule too many or overly long visits in a single day!

- Typically, 2-3 key visits of about 1 hour each per day are sufficient, depending on travel distances.

Timing

- Follow the schedule strictly throughout the tour!
- One delay causes an avalanche of delays....
- Avoid accommodating "one last question or one last activity" if it risks making the group late for lunch or exhausting participants.

Duration

- Avoid overly long and detailed cultural programs!
- Typically, 1-1.5 hours is appropriate, depending on the group size.
- The program should be well-structured, including an introduction, excursion, interactive segment, and tasting session.

Authentic experiences

- Don't stage "nice" experiences just for tourists—they can tell when it's inauthentic.
- Instead, arrange visits with real people and entrepreneurs like farmers, home-based restaurants, and local producers.

Safety

- Never compromise on safety!
- Always ensure that authentic experiences are well-prepared, such as providing life vests on fishing boats, clear instructions, and adherence to safety regulations. A single incident could ruin tourism in your area.

Food

- Do not base group menus on specific, authentic local foods only!
- Traditional dishes can be offered as small tastings or paired with a story from the host who prepares them, perhaps with a contemporary twist.

End of day

- Do not be late for meals!
- If possible, plan evening meals in the same place/nearby as the overnight accommodation.
- Always plan for time to refresh and change before dinner.
- Provide at least 1 hour of free time before dinner.





Summary & Conclusion

This document titled "Marketing and Promotion of Common Regional Culinary Tourism Products" explores the development, management, and promotion of culinary tourism as a growing trend in the travel industry. Culinary tourism has shifted from being a secondary activity to a primary driver of travel decisions, reflecting the global surge in interest in food culture and authentic dining experiences.

Key Takeaways

Creating a Food Travel Ecosystem:

The success of culinary tourism initiatives depends on the collaboration of diverse stakeholders, including local governments, restaurateurs, food producers, and tourism agencies. This document emphasises that a unified approach is critical in building a strong, recognisable food tourism identity that can effectively attract tourists.

Food experiences are no longer just an add-on to sightseeing or cultural visits; they are central to travellers' decisions when selecting destinations. This shift has led to the rise of food-focused platforms and media, which in turn influence travel behaviours.

Development of Culinary Destinations:

Establishing a destination as a culinary hotspot takes time and strategic planning. Regions like the Basque Country, Tuscany,

and Provence have successfully become leading food destinations, but the journey starts by integrating food experiences as complementary elements of broader travel packages.

As culinary tourism grows, regions should aim to first combine food with cultural and active tourism before evolving into a destination where food itself is the primary attraction.

Culinary Tourism Offers:

The document highlights the importance of diversified offerings, from guided food tours and self-guided itineraries to experiences sold through online platforms. The growth of digital platforms has democratised access to culinary experiences, allowing local providers to market their offers to a global audience.

Travel agencies and tour operators play a significant role in promoting these experiences, especially for multi-day packages and group tours. Successful food travel packages often blend food activities with visits to cultural landmarks or active tourism elements.

Setting Up and Managing Food Trails:

Food trails can be developed around specific themes like wines, ciders, traditional dishes, or locally sourced ingredients. The success of such trails lies in selecting authentic and distinctive features that resonate with both locals and tourists.

Collaboration is vital in managing food trails. From pooling resources to establishing marketing strategies, local entities must work together to create a cohesive experience that enhances the region's appeal.

Common Pitfalls in Group Tours:

The document provides practical advice on avoiding common mistakes when planning group culinary tours. These include minimising travel time between sites, avoiding overly rigid schedules, and ensuring authentic, safe, and engaging experiences for participants.

Conclusion

Culinary tourism represents a powerful tool for regions to attract tourists by showcasing local flavours, traditions, and food culture. To capitalise on this trend, destinations must focus on building well-defined food identities, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and creating memorable, authentic experiences that cater to both local and international visitors. The document also underscores the importance of strategic marketing, digital integration, and careful planning in the development of food trails and tourism offers. By addressing the unique needs and preferences of modern travellers, regions can transform culinary assets into sustainable tourism ventures that benefit both communities and visitors alike.

Ultimately, the growth of culinary tourism depends on authenticity, quality, and effective cooperation among all stakeholders. With the right strategies in place, food tourism can become a cornerstone of regional development, driving economic growth while preserving cultural heritage.



Findings During Piloting 2025

The testing and piloting of culinary tourism solutions across participating regions confirmed that small and medium-sized food and tourism enterprises can significantly strengthen their competitiveness when acting together under a shared narrative and regional identity. The pilots demonstrated that collaboration between producers, tourism service providers, and local authorities not only builds trust but also creates concrete products and experiences that are attractive to visitors and beneficial for local economies.

Across all regions, a clear pattern emerged: coordinated branding, digital visibility, and experiential activities are the most effective tools for transforming local food resources into market-ready tourism offers. Networks that adopted a clear slogan or story, and that invested in coherent visual identity and storytelling, managed to raise both recognition and motivation among participating businesses. Joint events and thematic packages—such as farm dinners, tasting routes, or regional fairs—proved especially successful in activating local networks, strengthening community pride, and generating direct visitor engagement.

Digital tools played a central role in every pilot. Interactive maps, planning applications, online campaigns, and professional photo and video materials allowed even small producers to reach audiences beyond their immediate surroundings. Social media platforms were the most efficient channels for marketing, particularly when supported by well-structured campaigns, influencer cooperation, and authentic

visual content. These tools not only helped to communicate the offer but also encouraged collaboration among businesses that shared resources, photos, and cross-promotion opportunities.

The pilots also **revealed several recurring challenges**. Many rural SMEs face limited time and human resources, which makes it difficult to combine production, marketing, and visitor services. Building capacity in digital marketing and product packaging remains essential. Legal restrictions (such as alcohol marketing rules in some regions) and logistical challenges linked to seasonal operations also affected implementation speed and scope. However, the collaborative approach of the project—where partners shared tools, templates, and mentoring—proved to be an efficient way of overcoming these limitations.

In general, the piloting confirmed that culinary tourism can act as a driver for regional cooperation, innovation, and visibility.

When producers are **encouraged to tell their stories**, when destinations communicate under a unified theme, and when digital and on-site experiences are professionally connected, the outcome is measurable: higher engagement, increased visitor numbers, new products, and strengthened local identities. These insights form a strong basis for further scaling of culinary tourism across the Baltic Sea Region and provide a replicable model for other rural areas seeking to connect food, people, and place through shared values and authentic experiences.



The Cider Route invites you on a journey to discover the varied world of cider in Latvia - cider types, cider drinking traditions and nuances of cider-making. You are invited to gardens and cideries, from the wondrous spring, adorned with apple blossoms, to autumn, filled with the aroma of ripe apples; you will visit owners that serve genuine Latvian cider at their guest houses as well as have the opportunity to discover different tastes at cider celebrations. Making cider is a lifestyle, and cider makers share the conviction that this refreshing drink deserves both a place on solemn occasions that represent our country, and at the dinner table to enrich and enhance the taste of food.



The Manufaktouren-MV invites you on a journey to discover Mecklenburg-Vorpommern's artisan world – from cold-pressed oils, sea salt and mustard to coffee, chocolate, spirits and farm delicacies. With an easy tour planner, you design your own route through coastal villages and lake districts, stopping at factories for tastings, behind-the-scenes visits and seasonal events. From spring bloom to autumn harvest, you'll meet makers who press, roast, distil or bake – and hear the stories and skills behind products proudly rooted 'Naturally from MV.' Whether you build a family-friendly loop or a multi-day gourmet escape, Manufaktouren-MV connects small producers, visitor-ready shops and hands-on experiences into one coherent path – a flavourful way to feel the place, support local value chains and bring authentic souvenirs home.



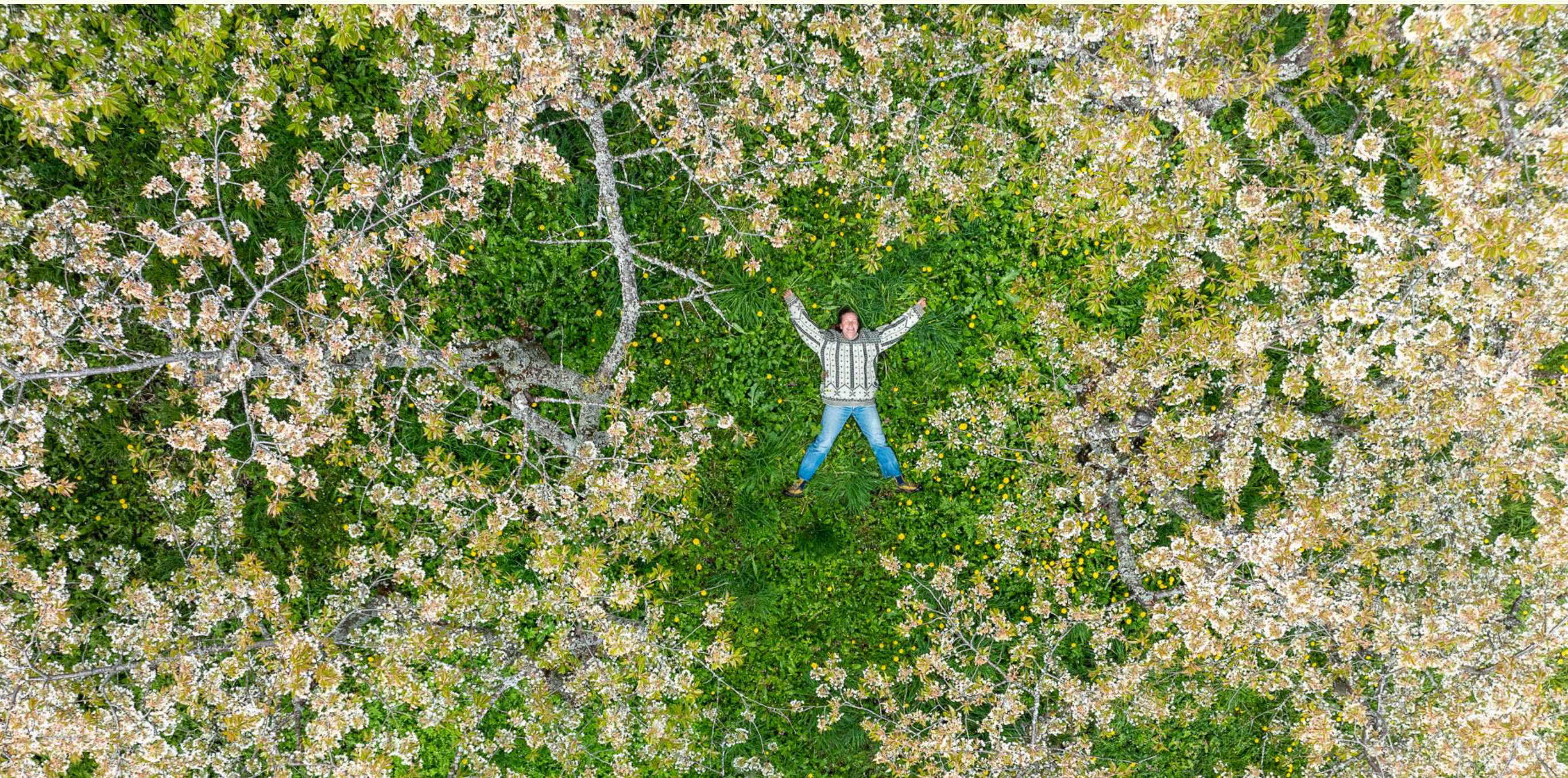
Norwegian Cider Route

www.siderlandet.no



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The Norwegian Cider Route - Western Norway invites you to discover fjord-side orchards and the craft of Norwegian cider, from blossom to harvest. Winding through Hardanger, Sognefjord, Ryfylke and Sunnmøre, the route leads to farms and cideries where you stroll among apple trees, tour cellar rooms, and taste sparkling, still and ice ciders paired with local cheeses, seafood and cured meats. In spring, rows of trees bloom against snowy peaks; in late summer and autumn, presses hum and farm cafés brim with fresh flavors. Hosts share terroir, varieties and methods that blend deep tradition with modern craft, and many offer farm shops, tastings and seasonal events. Whether you arrive by car, bike or boat, the Cider Route celebrates a landscape and way of life—raising a glass to place, people and food.



Pomorskie Taste invites you to explore Pomerania through its kitchens, fields and shores—from the Baltic coast and Hel Peninsula to Kashubian lakes and the Żuławy lowlands. Along curated routes highlighted by Pomorskie Prestige and BASCIL, you'll meet farmers, fish smokers, cheesemakers, bakers, brewers and cider-makers; tour orchards, smokehouses and mills; and taste seasonal menus shaped by the day's catch and harvest—Baltic herring, rye breads, Kashubian strawberries, forest mushrooms, goose and honey. Spring and summer bring bustling markets and farm cafés; autumn ushers in pick-and-press days, workshops and harvest feasts. Everywhere, hosts share stories of craft, terroir and tradition, while farm shops and restaurants offer pairings and take-home flavors. Whether you wander coastal towns or country lanes, Pomorskie Taste connects people, place and plate in an authentic, memorable way.





Timeless Flavors guides you through Central Lithuania's manors, river valleys, and orchard villages, where heritage recipes and farm crafts are part of daily life. Along the route, family homesteads, meaderies, and village kitchens host hands-on workshops—bread baking, cheese making, herb and berry sessions—paired with tastings of mead, fruit wines, teas, and preserves. Spring invites foraging; summer ripens gardens for open-air meals; autumn brings harvest pickling, jam making, and mead. Everywhere, hosts share stories of manors, wood-fired ovens, and bee lore, while farm shops offer jams, herbs, cheeses, and seasonal bakes to take home. Hosts welcome individuals, families, and small groups; many experiences are bookable year-round by prior arrangement. Map your own loop or follow curated thematic routes to weave manor visits, tastings, and workshops into an easy day trip or a linger-longer weekend.



BASCIL PROJECT PARTNERS

KRINOVA INCUBATOR AND SCIENCE PARK

ESTONIAN CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE

ASSOCIATION OF RURAL TOURISM MECKLENBURG-WESTERN POMERANIA E.V.

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LOMALAIDUN RY

SOUTH-EASTERN FINLAND UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES - XAMK