

Ireland to US Food Tourism the Diaspora and the Locale

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Abstract : Food identity is synonymous with many national tourism destinations and perceptions in tourist source markets - stereotypes could include snails in France; beer in Britain and Germany; paella in Spain - and is an accepted element of national identity that can be incorporated into tourism experiences. Irish transatlantic food connections are culturally strong with diaspora subsequent generations in the US displaying an online interest in traditional Irish food, even with a twist. Back 'home', the value of the local indigenous experience was a specific element of the way The Gathering 2013 was promoted to the Irish diaspora, developing community interest and input to tourism. Over the past 20 years, Ireland has realized the value of its food industry to tourism. This has included the establishment of food development programmes for the hospitality industry; food festivals as a possible element of the tourist experience; and a programmes of food ambassadors to market Irish produce and to encourage service providers to understand; utilize and incorporate this into their offerings. Irish produce is being now actively marketed as part of the proposed tourism experience, to particular segment markets including transatlantic visitors. In addition, individual providers are becoming aware of the value of the market, and how to gain from it. Also, networks of food providers have developed collaborative structures of promoting their experiences to audiences, displaying a cluster approach of tourism development towards that sector. A power point presentation will look at how Irish produce contributes to tourism marketing and promotion of Ireland to America; how that may have assisted sustainable development of communities here; and hopes to elicit some discussion relating to longer term identification of Irish food, as part of tourism, for the potential benefit of the 'locale'.

Keywords : Irish, USA, food, tourism

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