



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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The Food Tourism Action Plan for Wales 2015 – 2020





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Cover image: Summer meal in Crickhowell
This page: Cooking cockles and mussels,
Cardigan Bay Seafood Festival

1. Background

Food Tourism is defined by Welsh Government as 'any activity that promotes a high quality, distinctive, local and sustainable food experience linked to a particular place'.

'Towards Sustainable Growth: An Action Plan for the Welsh Food and Drink Industry 2014-2020' recognises the importance of the local food supply chain to the food industry in Wales, encompassing local retail, hospitality/ food service and direct retail (farm shops, markets and festivals).

In 2009 the Welsh Government's Food Division (FD) and Visit Wales (VW) jointly launched the 'Food Tourism Action Plan for Wales', recognising the potential for growth within this sector. This plan was in place until 2013.

Food and Tourism are particularly important in Wales due to the economic importance of these two sectors. Food Tourism provides a means of drawing together the strengths of a local destination by building the relationships between the hospitality/catering industry and local food and drink producers.

Food is an essential part of the tourism offer in Wales, arguably because it provides the most common point of contact with visitors. Local produce and a range of quality places to eat and drink are key drivers for visitors when visiting any area (Welsh food and drink skills project Oct 2011).

Visitor trends indicate that interest in food continues to rise at an exponential rate and now reaches beyond the elite, deep into the general population and as this is the case various strategies have been developed to encourage this trend.

Food tourism is about helping visitors to uncover our local, culinary gems – not just leaving it to chance that they will find them by themselves. It is about regional distinctiveness – championing our fantastic local produce and telling the story of its journey to our plates, so that first time visitors go away feeling a real connection with the area and are eager to come back for seconds.

Increasing the prevalence of local and regional foods in our shops and on our menus offers immediate and direct benefits to our local economy. Farmers, producers, suppliers, restaurateurs, cafes and pubs and accommodation providers should be engaging with each other and the tourism industry to improve food information available to visitors and enable informed choice. The clever marketing of signature dishes, local events, hero products, food ambassadors and award-winning venues results in increased visitor spend, sustainable, economic development and – most importantly – satisfied customers.

The Welsh Government published its 'Partnership for Growth' Strategy for Tourism in June 2013. The strategy provides an overall vision and set of aims for growth in the tourism industry up to 2020. The strategy identified a product-led approach to developing and marketing tourism in Wales. Food is an integral part of the visitor experience, and the Food Tourism Action Plan 2015 – 2020 will target the five key areas identified in the strategy – Promoting the Wales brand, developing the product and people, place building and increasing performance.

2. Current Situation

Activity to date has focussed on those actions identified in the 2009 'Food Tourism Action Plan'. These have evolved around activity co-ordinated at a regional level via the four regional food groups, Ffres in the South West of Wales, Food North Wales and Local Food Talks in Mid and South East Wales. The focus of activity has been on collaboration and building local relationships and partnerships. Destination Management Groups such as Anglesey and National Parks are also developing partnerships to focus on the development of food tourism in their areas.

Efforts have also been made to identify, co-ordinate and collaborate with the numerous more local food tourism projects funded via the Rural Development Programme. Food Division has hosted three Food Tourism networking events in conjunction with the Wales Rural Network in order to identify these projects and share information.

Food producers and hospitality businesses in Wales have benefitted in recent years from investment through Visit Wales's Tourism Investment Support Scheme and the Coastal Communities Fund and these funding opportunities, together with the new round of the Rural Development Programme, will continue well into the lifetime of this action plan.

3. Opportunity

Great Britain Day Visits Survey (GBDVS)¹ 2013 reports that 89 million tourism day visits were made by British residents to destinations in Wales, generating

expenditure of £3,061 million. Eating out accounts for 40% of this expenditure – £1,219m.

- Food is an important general holiday component however Wales falls behind competitors in terms of the perception of performance.
- Visitors to Wales rate food as one of the lowest aspects, behind shopping but still a respectable 8.8 out of 10 (UK staying visitors).
- In 2013, Eating and Drinking out made up 20% of total domestic holiday tourism spend in Wales².

Recent research by Scotland Food and Drink show that, overall, visitors to Scotland spend about 21% of their holiday budget on eating and drinking, over 20p out of every £1. That means Scotland is generating over £2million per day through food and drink tourism, and over £1,500 per minute!

The following have been identified as potential opportunities for the Tourism and Hospitality sector in Wales to capitalise on the demand and interest in locally sourced food and drink:

- i. To make its mark on the Food Tourism map Wales needs to embrace the good quality local food experience, in order to deliver an authentic Welsh experience to visitors.
- ii. Developing links between the Food and Tourism sectors provides the potential to maximise the amount of income retained in the area and the resulting multiplier effect on the Welsh Economy.
- iii. Collaborative working and the development of local food supply chains has the potential of raising the profile of Wales as a food destination.

¹ <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/great-britain-day-visits-survey/?lang=en>

² <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/great-britain-tourist-survey/?lang=en>

4. The Future – 2015 and Beyond

The scope for the development of Food Tourism in Wales is wide ranging and provides an opportunity to engage with a range of partner organisations, therefore collaboration and co-operation should be at the core of all activity.

The overall aim is to raise awareness of Wales's Food and Drink and make information about Welsh Food and Drink more widely available to businesses and visitors to Wales.

Our ambition, by 2020, is to ensure that food tourism is integrated into all of Visit Wales's activities.

The Challenge: 'To raise Wales's profile as a high quality Food Tourism destination'

The Objectives are to:

- Improve Visitor Access to and awareness of Welsh Food and Drink.
- Encourage Welsh hospitality businesses to source more local food and drink.
- Increase the prevalence of Welsh Food and Drink on menus and retail offering.
- Identify skills gaps in knowledge, sourcing and preparation of local food and drink.

The 2015 – 2020 Food Tourism Action Plan will build on the activities and knowledge and experience resulting from the 2009 – 2013 Food Tourism Action Plan. The Action Plan is also intended to inform and provide a lead on the development of future food tourism projects and proposals.

The Food Division and Visit Wales have identified a joint budget to deliver the

plan, which will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant alongside, for example, the development of projects in the new round of European Funding.

Visit Wales will continue to develop its food and drink content on the VisitWales.com web-site and to incorporate food and drink into future marketing campaigns.

Initiatives identified:

- Promotional activity to add value to the tourist market, improve the visitor experience, promote the 'Wales' brand. Develop further the Visit Wales website for Food content as the 'first point of contact' for consumers and visitors to Wales.
- Press and PR to grow the visitor market, capitalize on the growth in food interest market, collaboration on in-Wales Press and media visits.
- Developing Expertise in the food tourism sector, disseminating best practice, working with regional catering colleges and other champions of Welsh food and drink.
- Promote the benefits of using locally sourced food and drink to Welsh hospitality businesses.
- Work with stakeholders to raise the quality of the food offer at signature and major events, activities and attractions.
- Collaboration on Awards for Tourism and Food industry in Wales.

In preparing this Action Plan we are not seeking to replicate, or indeed replace the existing efforts of stakeholders but rather to facilitate greater cohesion and direction between all concerned.

Food Tourism Action Plan – Priority Tasks

The following priority tasks have been identified within the themes below:

1. Events and Activities
2. Information
3. Developing Expertise
4. PR and Marketing

Actions	Lead & Partners	Timing	Outputs
1. Events and Activities			
1.1 Support B2B Events for the food and hospitality sector.	Welsh Government VW/FD	Year 1	3 Events by March 2016 – 120 businesses engaged.
1.2 Encourage the integration of Regional Awards for Food and Drink in Wales.	Welsh Government Local Authorities/Private and Public sector Agencies	Year 2	The range and number of Food and Drink Awards identified and partners encouraged to work collaboratively to introduce consistent criteria.
1.3 Work with stakeholders to develop a best practice model for events and activities (Food Festivals, Food Trails etc.).	Welsh Government Local Authorities/Private and Public sector Agencies	Year 2	Development of a sustainability toolkit for Food Tourism events and activities.
1.4 Host National and Regional Food Tourism Network events.	Welsh Government Industry	Year 1	4 Events by March 2016.
1.5 Visit Wales's Major Events Unit to encourage event owners and organisers to source local/Welsh food and drink at their events wherever possible.	Welsh Government Industry	Years 1 and 2	Event owners and organisers to be encouraged to source locally wherever possible.
1.6 Ensure coordination between food events emanating from the next round of RDP.	Welsh Government Local Authorities/Private and Public sector Agencies	Year 1	Awareness to be raised between project developers of opportunities to collaborate and share best practice.

Actions	Lead & Partners	Timing	Outputs
2. Information			
2.1 Explore the demand for an all Wales consumer facing Food Tourism website and consider options.	Welsh Government Industry	Year 2	Evidence gathered to inform decision as to next steps in developing food and drink website.
2.2 Investigate Best Practice in the development of Producer Directories in order to provide consistency of information to the sector.	Welsh Government Industry	Year 2	Evidence gathered to inform the future development of producer directories.
2.3 Commission research related to food tourism in Wales from both consumer and industry perspectives in order to inform future planning.	Welsh Government	Year 2	Research agreed and commissioned.
2.4 Develop an information toolkit to provide stakeholders with best practice guidance to promote a consistent message in promotional materials and guidance (e.g. eating out guides) on matters such as Welsh Language requirements etc.	Welsh Government Industry	Years 1 and 2	Toolkit developed, including templates and criteria to ensure consistency in the production of promotional materials and guidance.
2.5 Signpost the industry to information on funding and support available from Welsh Government through Visit Wales/ Funding Division/Business Support.	Welsh Government	Year 1 and ongoing	The sector is kept informed of opportunities to apply for funding and support to develop their businesses and food tourism specifically, where appropriate.

Actions	Lead & Partners	Timing	Outputs
3. Developing Expertise			
3.1 Collate information for a local sourcing guide to provide stakeholders with information on the benefits to businesses of sourcing and promoting local food and drink.	Welsh Government Industry	Years 1 and 2	Local Sourcing guide designed.
3.2 Develop and pilot the Food Tourism Business Support project to provide support for hospitality businesses to improve their food tourism offer and visitor experience.	Welsh Government Industry	Year 1	10 hospitality businesses supported and project evaluated.
3.3 Identify opportunities for collaboration with FE Colleges in Wales on Food and Hospitality.	Welsh Government Industry FE Colleges	Year 2	3 Opportunities identified.
3.4 Initiate opportunities to share best practice in food tourism.	Welsh Government Industry Local Authorities FE Colleges	Ongoing	Produce 4 Case Studies in year 1.
3.5 Encourage food and drink businesses to benefit from WRAP Cymru's initiatives to reduce waste and increase profitability.	WRAP CYMRU Welsh Government Industry	Year 2	Businesses targeted by WRAP and reducing waste.
3.6 Liaise with VW Quality Grading Team to encourage tourism businesses to improve the quality of the food offer, encourage use of local produce, and generally adopt Food Tourism best practice.	Welsh Government Industry	Year 1	Grading Officers to raise awareness of Food Tourism opportunities when visiting and advising businesses.

Actions	Lead & Partners	Timing	Outputs
4. PR and Marketing			
4.1 Commission PR Campaign to raise the profile of Wales Food and Drink to a wider/new audience.	Welsh Government	Year 1/ Ongoing	PR commissioned.
4.2 Collaboration on in Wales Media and Journalist visits.	Welsh Government Industry Local Authorities Private and Public Sector	Ongoing	Process in place to share information.
4.3 Identify appropriate Social Media to promote Food Tourism in Wales.	Welsh Government Industry Local Authorities Private and Public sector agencies	Years 1 and 2	Provide evidence base to inform future use of Social Media to promote Food Tourism.
4.4 Identify champions in the Food and Drink sector and provide them with a platform in order to raise the profile of Wales's Food and Drink.	Welsh Government Industry	Years 1 and 2	10 Champions supported to raise the profile of Wales Food and Drink.
4.5 Incorporate Welsh Food and Drink into future Visit Wales marketing campaigns.	Welsh Government Industry	Year 1	Food and drink to be part of future marketing campaigns.

