

Your Questions Answered

We Grow

We Catch

We Breed

We Enjoy

We Craft

We Cook

What is Year of Food & Drink about?

- We want to raise the profile of food and drink with local people, visitors and global markets by developing branding, marketing and promotional activities in Northern Ireland and across key markets.
- The Year of Food & Drink 2016 has a focus on tourism and Tourism NI is the lead organisation.
- The project also aims to support a wider agri-food objective to grow export food sales. Success in this area should also support the tourism agenda by building on Northern Ireland's destination reputation.

Why is this project focused on tourism?

- We have made significant progress in building a reputation for excellence in food production and hospitality in Northern Ireland. The explosion in artisan food and drink companies has led to some very interesting developments and a sharp increase in the quality and variety of produce available in Northern Ireland.
- Food and drink experiences have become increasingly important to tourism as they offer destinations an opportunity to differentiate and celebrate indigenous foods. While food and drink is a vehicle through which our visitors can learn about our heritage, landscape and culture as well as meet our people, it also accounts for a significant proportion of visitor spend.



We Catch

What is food and drink worth to tourism?

- In 2014 overnight visitors to Northern Ireland from all markets spent an estimated £751 million of which approximately 1/3 was spent on food and drink. In addition, £282 million was spent by NI residents on tourism day trips of which approximately 40% was on eating out.

What are the key objectives of Year of Food & Drink?

- An increase of 5% in food related visitor satisfaction ratings
- Support the increase of export sales to £30 million
- £10 million of positive PR generated in NI, ROI and GB; and
- Increased entries into Great Taste Awards.



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What awards and accolades have been given to NI food and drink?

Awards

- Our artisan food producers have gained considerable international renown from food critics and media. 99 Northern Ireland food and drink companies secured 349 gold stars in the UK's most important taste competition, The UK Great Taste Awards, in 2014. This was more than any other region of the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland.
- Another recent example includes the award of a silver medal to Shortcross Gin from County Down at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition earlier this year.
- In 2014, eighteen Northern Ireland foods, including beef, bacon, venison and fish, were listed in the Top 50 Foods by the UK Guild of Fine Food. The region's reputation for premium quality beef has been further enhanced by the location here of the world's biggest Himalayan salt-chamber for dry-ageing meat.

- Three products have achieved European protected status (Protected Geographical Indication). They are Comber Early Potatoes, Lough Neagh Eels and Armagh Bramley Apples.

Accolades

- Our talented chefs and restaurants have continued to gain accolades such as Michelin Bib Gourmand. Innovative restaurants like OX are forging ahead with creative food preparation techniques and distinctive dishes using the very best of what is produced locally and gaining considerable praise from some of the top international food and restaurant critics. OX and EIPIC have now secured Michelin star recognition.
- Derry~Londonderry was runner up in the highly prestigious Restaurants Association of Ireland Foodie Towns award for 2015.
- High Life, BA's in-flight magazine, recently named Belfast as one of the best cities in the world for good food. Northern Ireland gained more awards in the Irish Restaurant Awards than other parts of the island.
- These awards and accolades demonstrate to visitors and local people that they can expect highly creative menus with delicious dishes using the region's wholesome ingredients with safety and provenance.



We
Craft

What is the food and drink sector worth to the economy?

- Food and drink is Northern Ireland's biggest manufacturer, contributing almost £5 billion to the economy in 2014, generating sales abroad in excess of £4 billion and providing employment for around 100,000 across an extensive supply chain. Almost 75% of food and drink is sold outside Northern Ireland.
- As well as being a major supplier to Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, the industry exports to more than 60 countries including the US, Asia, the Middle East and other parts of Europe. Fresh fish and seafood, such as salmon, oysters and langoustines, are exported to Europe and further afield.
- Almost 30,000 farms, largely family owned, provide a comprehensive range of quality raw materials including grass-fed beef and lamb and milk as well as poultry, cereals, potatoes and vegetables. The sector includes many of Northern Ireland's biggest and most successful exporters.



What can we expect to happen during the year?

- This is another unique opportunity for the whole of Northern Ireland to work collaboratively to reach a common goal. Tourism NI will endeavour to ensure that both existing and new events play a key role in the success of the Year of Food & Drink 2016.
- Much of the activity is about supporting and enabling the industry to maximise this opportunity. This will include;
 - a new dedicated Year of Food & Drink 2016 events fund.
 - development tool kits.
 - mentorship programmes.
 - brand guidelines and templates to support initiatives with key sectoral organisations.
 - an integrated communication delivery plan to pull all the strands together to maximise the PR and communications opportunities that exist.
 - Year of Food & Drink will play a central part of the Northern Ireland marketing destination sell.
- Similarly Tourism Ireland and Invest NI are weaving Northern Ireland Year of Food & Drink into their communication plans for 2016.

