

Practical Solutions For Designing Culinary Tourism Services Provided By Local Food Producers In Baltic Sea Region



Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



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RESILIENT ECONOMIES AND COMMUNITIES

BASCIL

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Chapter 1

Forward – Our Approach

We address this manual to facilitate the switch towards the food tourism industry both for change agents as well as food entrepreneurs, farmers and producers who can diversify their portfolio adding new experiences on the basis of their good quality food products.

When we think about change agents we have in mind advisors, managers and employees of farmers and producers associations as well as tourism organisations who are helping rural SMEs to prepare and promote food travel experiences. Our special target group are the project partners in the BASCIL project, who support entrepreneurs in their region in the process of providing new culinary tourism experiences.

We want to make it easier for farmers and food producers to expand their offer with new experiences related to culinary tourism. Thanks to this, the fruits of their labour are known by tourists, who more and more often travel to get to know the local culture through taste.

Did you know that, according to the research carried out by World Food Travel Association, more than 50% of travellers consider themselves food tourists? We want entrepreneurs to gain a road map showing them how to build a cost-effective service, based on high-quality food products. A service that will help them go beyond the product economy and enter the experience economy.

We will guide you step by step and draw a road map on how to gain added value for your hard work. The preparation part of our common journey will be an introduction to food tourism, as defined by the World Food Travel Association as the act of travelling for a taste of a place in order to get a sense of place. We will then provide you with a tool to check on your existing products and your ability to be a food tourism host. In the following steps we will inspire you on how to upgrade your business portfolio by using a number of tools and strategies based on the Business Model Canvas (BMC) and help you to add a new service, which is: food experience.

We will follow up by showing how you, together with your neighbours, fellow farmers and producers, can combine and build something even bigger - a culinary tourism destination.

The most important promise we would like to address to you is that by using these simple tools you can diversify your business and sources of income and at the same time achieve a higher income. You will also gain the possibility to meet new people who perceive your work and products as an engaging story they would like to experience by themselves.

The important aspect of this manual is that it is written in close cooperation between many partners jointly developing a new approach to create a more resilient food production sector in the Baltic Sea Region. Together we formulated answers to key questions which may drive development of the sector.

During our mutual meetings we discussed key products to build our region's food travel experiences. We pinpointed the most common food products in the collaborating regions that may become a foundation of food travel experiences.

We also discussed what are the challenges that regions are facing nowadays in their way to compose food travel experiences. Among many answers we have received from BASICL partners representatives from: region Skåne in Sweden, Pomorskie region in Poland, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania in Germany, Klaipeda Region in Lithuania, Norway, Latvia and Estonia the most common were:

- * Seasonality of tourism industry in the region
- * Limited resources of SME's
- * Networking and cooperation
- * Knowledge and information on innovative tools and systems that can be easily applicable for SMEs
- * Finding the right customers
- * Poor marketing





Chapter 2

Setting the stage for food tourism in Baltic Sea Region

Entering the world of culinary tourism can be a fascinating adventure. Getting to know new flavours, places and cultures is now one of the favourite activities of tourists around the world. The Baltic Sea Region has a story to tell about its tastes, history and passion for food. A story, vivid and authentic, which will be remembered for a long time and make tourists willing to return guided by the memory of good taste.

You are probably a food producer or farmer and you know your business very well. What we may offer as the outcome of our common journey is a new product in your portfolio. In fact it is going to be a food travel experience. It can help you in many ways to build your financial resilience for both good and harsh times. We want to inspire you to switch to new channels of income that will make your sales more diversified and profitable and, importantly, it will help you to enjoy your work more.

The advantages that will go hand in hand with tourist services are the:

- * Increase direct sales
- * Ability to start selling on-line or to increase what.....?
- * Less dependence on the weather
- * New, interesting jobs for you and your staff
- * Sale of souvenirs based on your business
- * Getting to know and collaborating with new target groups
- * The emergence or strengthening of your brand
- * Meeting lots of new interesting people
- * Increased self-esteem and sense of pride in the business

Before we start, let's think about what food tourism really is and where this phenomenon comes from.

According to the World Food Travel Association (WFTA): Food tourism is travelling for the taste of the place in order to get to know the sense of the place.

It means that people want to enjoy and get familiar with local, authentic culture via original food and beverage they can experience in the destination.

Is it possible to get to know new places in a more pleasant way? The involvement of all five senses gives culinary tourism a privileged place in building travel memories and creating place offers.

Many independent studies point to the growing importance of culinary tourism as a travel driver for a growing number of tourists in the world.

53% of leisure travellers are food travellers according to WFTA (Source: 2020 Food Travel Monitor).

81% of respondents agree that trying local foods and cuisines is the part of travelling they look forward to most. (Source 2023 Global Trends Report, American Express Travel).

"Food tourism is no longer just a segment of tourism, it is the core of the tourism experience and a necessity in the marketing of every destination" Udi Goldschmidt Israeli Culinary Culture Association - Chairman of the Council, WFTA Ambassador to Israel

Tourists want to experience culinary tourism in many ways. They are no longer interested only in passive learning about the flavours of the place through the purchase of products. Still, they are very happy to take a culinary souvenir with them, e.g. cheese, honey, smoked fish, wine or beer as a travel memory. However, the most sought-after experiences within the framework of culinary tourism are such activities as: visiting local restaurants, attending food festivals, participating in local food tours, wine and beer tastings, brewery and winery tours, and taking part in cooking classes.



Latest trends affecting culinary tourism in Baltic Sea Region

Culinary tourism in the Baltic Sea basin can develop dynamically, as it perfectly fits into both supply and demand trends.

The most important supply trends currently observed in the Baltic Sea basin are:

- * Increased development of local craftsmanship. This trend is visible among others in: farm cheesemaking, production of cold meats, bakery and pastry making.
- * Artisanal alcohol production. Cider, wine from grapes and fruit wines, moon shine, tincture. Old traditions are flourishing once again due to law liberalisation in many parts of the Baltic Sea Region with the outstanding example of Norway cider which due to law liberalisation has rapidly grown in sales and can be bought directly from the farm.
- * Growing interest in old recipes and species that use local tradition, culture and natural assets in the best way. This phenomenon is combined with the desire to produce unique, difficult to counterfeit food products. They are often protected by quality marks or certificates such as Culinary Heritage or Protected designation of origin.
- * Growing interest in sustainable, ecological agriculture and breeding. Organic farming is the way to avoid pesticides and

fertilisers that often influence taste (in short terms) and health (in long terms).



Reflections

Here you will find a short resume on how you can use these trends composing new food travel experiences or reassessing an existing one :

- * Remember to connect your product to local history and culture.
- * The more handcraft is in your product the better food experience you can deliver.
- * The more ecologically friendly and transparent the cycle of production the easier to build interesting narration on it.



Chapter 3

What Is The Business Model Canvas And Why Do We Use It?

There are several tools for developing and visualising new ideas and business models. The Business Model Canvas is one of the most effective for business development. Although few business owners have heard of the Business Model Canvas, every business, regardless of size, uses this canvas every day to drive, sell, promote and quantify its operations. The Canvas is simply a tool for visualising or mapping your own business in order to assess your current operation, address eventual issues with your business and explore new possibilities to grow or diversify your business.

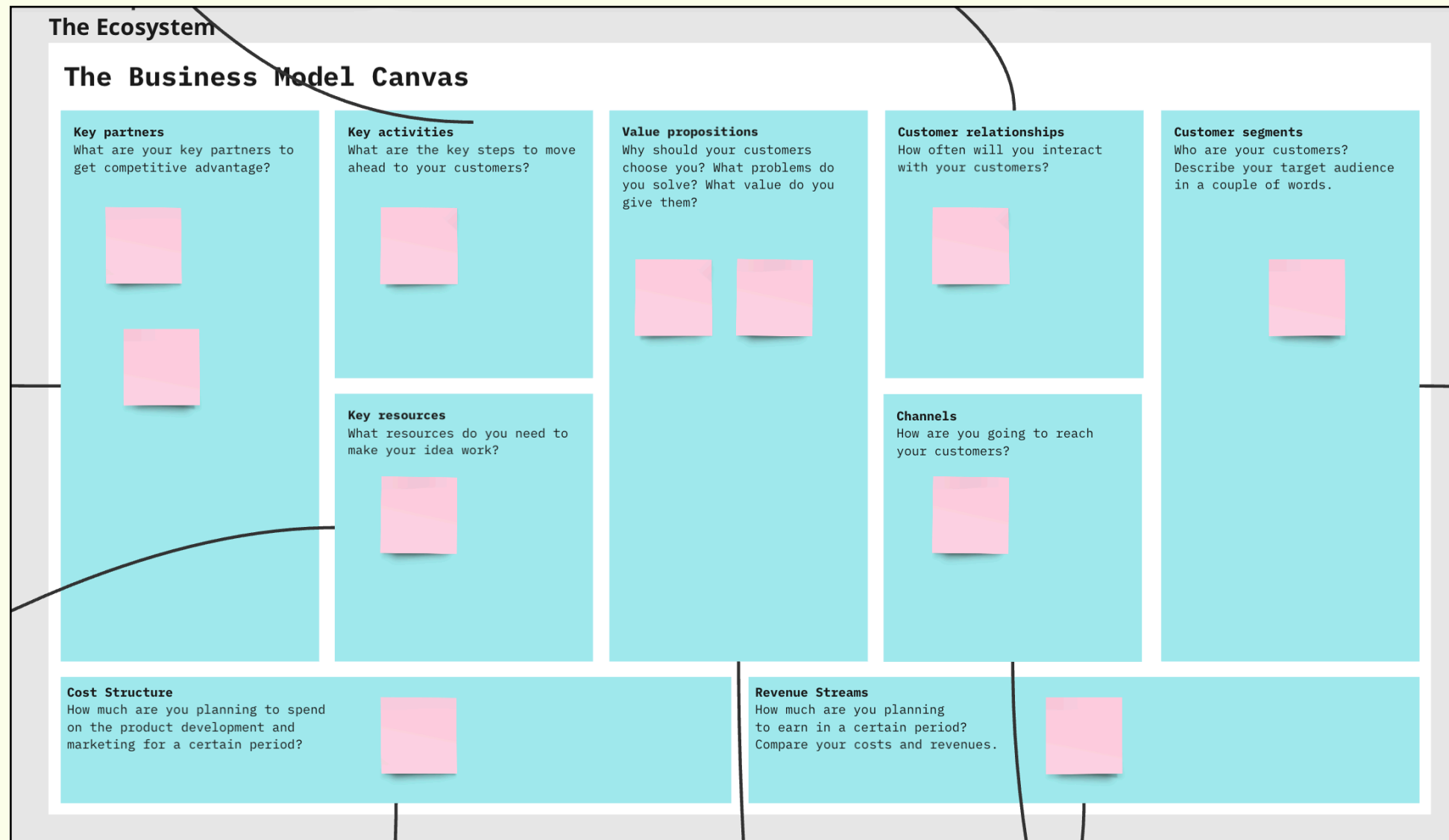
The Business Model Canvas is based on the concept of Desirability, Feasibility and Viability and is a valuable tool for companies to visualise, analyse, and communicate their business model. It promotes strategic thinking, alignment, and adaptability, allowing organisations to create, evaluate, and refine their business models to stay competitive in a rapidly changing business landscape.

The concept of Desirability, Feasibility, and Viability is often used in business and product development to assess the potential success of an idea or project. Each aspect represents a different perspective that helps evaluate the different dimensions of an idea

Owners or business managers are usually responsible for driving the mapping process of the BMC however it is of vital importance to involve the entire organisation in the discussion and development work. Although managers have a good general idea of the entire business, employees and partners directly involved in different areas often have detailed knowledge and information about daily operations, customer or supplier relations, trends etc. Promoting an open and cooperative approach among all staff and partners, will significantly improve the performance of the business while fostering a culture of appreciation, responsibility and pride among all employees and partners.

The Canvas is made up of 9 blocks that together describe how a business, regardless of its size, operates.

describes not just a company's products and services but rather the value these provide to the customer. Simply put, the Value



Proposition describes why a customer is attracted to doing business with you. What value do you bring to them? What needs do you satisfy them?

The 3 blocks on the left: Key partners, Key activities and Key resources, make up the Feasibility section. Here the company describes how it operates in order to deliver its products and services to its customers.

The 3 blocks on the right: Customer segments, Channels and Customer relationships plus the centre block Value Proposition, make up the Desirability section. Here a company describes its current and intended customers, what sales and communication channels are used to reach them as well as the type of relationship (engagement) the company has with its customers. The Value proposition is a key block in the canvas, it

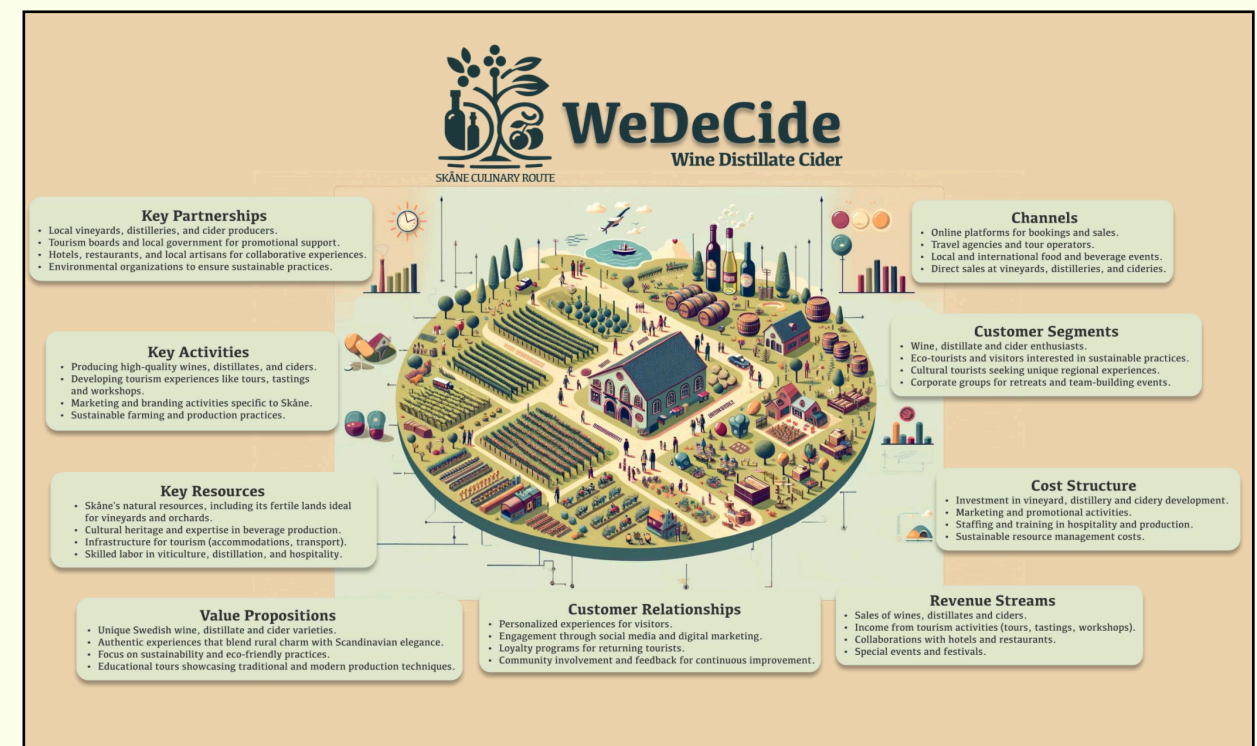
The 2 blocks at the bottom of the canvas: Cost structure and Revenue streams, make up the Viability section. Here the company describes in detail what fixed and variable costs are needed to deliver its goods and services as well as how it generates revenues from sales.

A company should use a Business Model Canvas (BMC) for several reasons:

- ✳️ **Visual representation:** The BMC provides a visual and concise representation of the company's business model on a single canvas.
- ✳️ **Comprehensive overview:** The canvas covers all essential aspects of a business, including customer segments, value propositions, channels, customer relationships, revenue streams, key activities, resources, partnerships, and cost structure. It ensures that no important component of the business model is overlooked and provides a holistic view of the entire business.
- ✳️ **Strategic alignment:** The BMC helps align different parts of the company by providing a shared understanding of how each component of the business model contributes to the overall strategy.
- ✳️ **Iterative and agile approach:** The BMC encourages an iterative and agile approach to business modelling. As a visual tool, it allows for quick updates and modifications, making it easier to test and refine different aspects of the business model.
- ✳️ **Communication and collaboration:** The BMC serves as a common language for communication and collaboration within the organisation. It facilitates discussions among team members, departments, and stakeholders, helping them

share ideas, insights, and perspectives on the various components of the business model.

- ✳️ **Identifying opportunities and challenges:** The canvas helps companies identify potential opportunities for innovation, growth, or improvement within their business model. By visualising the current state of the business, it becomes easier to identify areas for optimisation, expansion, or diversification.
- ✳️ **Start point for business planning:** The BMC can serve as a starting point for developing a more detailed business plan or strategy. It provides a foundation for further analysis and planning, helping companies define and refine their value propositions, customer segments, and competitive advantages.



What do we mean by Desirability, Feasibility and Viability?

Desirability refers to the level of appeal or attractiveness of a product or service to its intended users or customers. It involves understanding the needs, wants, and preferences of the target market and designing a solution that meets those requirements effectively. Desirability encompasses factors such as user experience, aesthetics, functionality, and the overall value proposition of the offering. By focusing on desirability, businesses aim to create products or services that generate customer interest and demand.



Feasibility assesses the practicality and achievability of implementing an idea or project. It involves evaluating the technical, operational and logistical aspects to determine whether the proposed solution is realistic and can be successfully executed. Feasibility considers factors such as available resources, technology requirements, skills,

infrastructure and timeframes. This evaluation helps identify constraints, risks and challenges that may arise during the implementation phase. By addressing feasibility, businesses ensure that the idea is feasible and can be implemented with the available resources.

Viability examines the economic and financial aspects of an idea or project. It focuses on determining whether the proposed solution is financially sustainable and can generate long-term profitability. Viability analysis involves assessing the market potential, revenue generation opportunities, cost structure, pricing strategy, competitive landscape, and potential return on investment. This evaluation helps identify the potential business growth and profitability. By considering viability, businesses aim to ensure that the idea is financially viable and has the potential to generate sustainable profits.



Chapter 4

Customer Segments: Who Is A Culinary Tourist?

Culinary traveller is a state of mind. No matter if the person comes from another end of the world or lives next door and is from generation X, Y or Z they value the experience that lies beyond food. Experience is the key word in tourism nowadays, especially in food tourism.

In the group of interested tourists there are almost all age ranges. According to 2020 Food Travel Monitor published by World Food Travel Association almost 85% of tourists are open to trying new, local flavours while travelling. At the same time almost 65% of residents want to know more about their local history and food heritage.

We should consider that although people value food experience, seldom is it a unique reason to travel. More likely it will be one of the factors that bring people to the destination. According to the 2023 Global Travel Trends Report published by American Express the travellers most likely to plan an entire food tourist trip are Millennials (around 40's) and Generation Z

(twenty-something years). In these groups, the percentage of declared food tourists reaches up to 50%, while the average of respondents is 35%. According to the same source 74% of respondents agree that they care more about creating a travel experience that meets their expectations than about the cost. Within the most important trends observed are wellness Wave, “Set-Jetting” and Delicious Destinations. Tourists are eager to try local food, explore new food options, engage in exploring the culture of the destination via food.



On the other hand, customers' preferences and values change as well. The difference between food produced by farmers on small farms and large-scale agriculture is becoming increasingly obvious to buyers. The demand trends that shape customers' preferences and can strengthen the interest in culinary tourism in the Baltic Sea basin are as follows:

- * Sleuthy Shoppers - investigative consumers. Sceptical of mass-produced products and the motivations of the companies that create them.
- * Clean lifers - value conscious living and travelling more than heavy partying and overcrowded places. They have a conviction that their buying choices can make the difference both for them and for the planet. They say no to alcohol, animal-based food and mass production.
- * Off the beaten track - undiscovered, peripheral places with authentic local culture are highly valued and may thrive if they propose good value for money offers.
- * Philantourism - compilation of philanthropy and tourism puts emphasis on how your decision will impact the destination economy. Philantourists will choose family run companies, local product and service suppliers and carefully choose how their tourist euro will fund the local economy.

Tourism, values and experiences - what I do must be in line with what I think and enrich my passion. During the trip, I have time and opportunities to develop my true nature through experiences involving all 5 senses.

Local travelling and micro tourism - being a tourist is a state of mind, you can travel within the place you live and discover its history, culture and tastes.

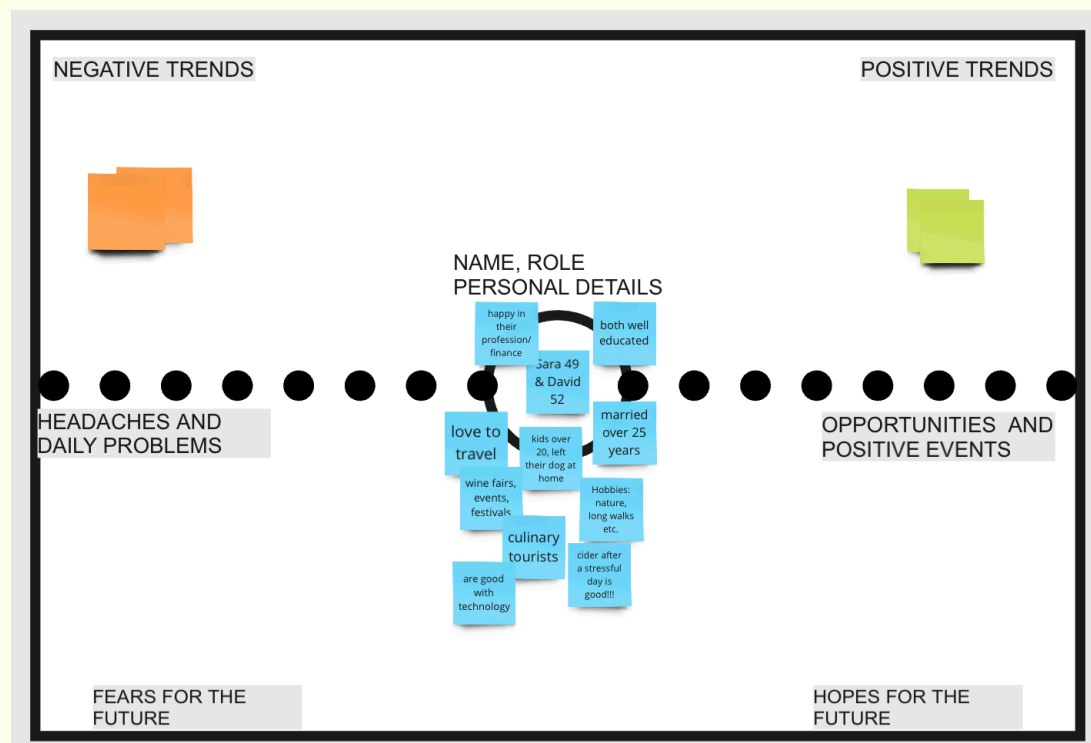
It all constitutes the profile of curious explorers that will find true joy in discovering new tastes and the stories that lie behind them in the Baltic Sea Region.

Once a company decides on which customer segment (or segments) to attract, it is important to understand who these customers are, what their needs are, what do they expect from a visit, lunch, a product or an overnight stay at your premises. What expectations do they have? How do they want to feel? What emotions and memories do they want to experience and remember



Persona Analysis

A simple, effective and fun tool to help you understand your customers, their needs, frustrations, aspirations and expectations, is the Persona Analysis. The Persona analysis works by creating a fictional representation of your target customer to gather insights on their behaviours, demographics, preferences and dislikes. This analysis will allow you to design, change, and improve your current or new offerings to your target customers in a way that will be attractive to them: we call this offer a Value Proposition.



Here is a step-by-step description on how to run a Persona analysis workshop with your team members:

Use www.miro.com as a digital brainstorming canvas or a large sheet of paper on which to write on. Here is a sample template of a Persona canvas:

- *Makeup and describe a fictional character to use as a reference point for your customer segment.
- *Give the character a name. Determine age and marital status. Go on to housing, education, hobbies, favourite TVseries / books, character traits and driving forces.
- *Go further into their professional role and speculate about what makes him/her happy, confident, inspired, annoyed, frustrated.

What goals do they have in their professional life, why did they choose their career?

What goals and aims do they have in their personal life?

How do they feel when they don't achieve their Goals? How do they feel when they do achieve them?

Include also the outside world and trends: What interests him/her?

What trends are they interested in and what new technologies do they use?

Dare to speculate without "inventing"

Take some time to reflect on this picture of your customer.

What aspects of your business will help you succeed or fail?

Is there anything new or different that you can think of?

Step into your customer's shoes, look at your own business and your relationship with your customers from their point of view.

What do you see? Is it the same picture?

Document everything on your paper or digital Canvas.

Reflections:

What have you learnt about your customer? Is it all as we thought it would be? Have you learnt something new?

How are we going to successfully approach and win over the customer to our company and our products? What solution will appeal to them? What message?

Step into the character: you are now the customer, look at your business idea from a customer perspective. What do you see? What would you like to see?

What conclusions have you made about your Value Proposition? Does it match your customers' needs?

During our series of workshops, as part of this first work package of the BASCIL project, we went through a series of tools and strategies that can be used to develop your own Business Model Canvas. [Here is a link](#) to a Miro board where you will find all the templates and instructions on how to think of and work with the different blocks of the BMC and implement some or all of these tools to develop your business into a culinary tourism centre.



Chapter 5

Customer Relations - Existing & New Customers

In general business terms, it is widely acknowledged that the cost of acquiring new customers is about 5 times higher than the cost of retaining existing customers. While it's always positive to increase customer size, customer retention allows you to maximise the value of customers you already have.

With that in mind, it is important to understand the value of your existing customer base, how you can maintain communication and entice them to come back, buy more of your products or even refer you to their friends. People are always ready to share their positive and different culinary and travel experiences. Take advantage and set up simple strategies to keep your business top of mind with your customers and their friends: A small discount, coupon, or a small gift with purchase can make a big difference.

Any business would benefit by taking stock of their existing customers, look at their buying patterns and behaviours, their

likes and dislikes. This is valuable information when deciding to launch a new offering or product or even when it's time to “kill your darlings” and decide which areas of your business do not perform.



Appeal to tourists who are already familiar with food travelling. A very beneficial way of promotion is to reach tourists who have already become customers of other entities. We don't have to build a market we can enter with our new product experience to an already existing shop! Therefore do not hesitate to use all possible on-line platforms that gather thousands of food experience lovers throughout the globe. Below you will find examples of some of the more popular platforms you can use to reach customers who are already aware of food experience:

Eatwith - is the first community sharing food experience. Very good to start with. Focused mostly on private events and those in or near big cities. dining, cooking classes and food tours.

Travelling Spoon - is offering inhouse meals, cooking classes and market tours. The mission of the platform founders is to "find you the most meaningful and memorable cultural experiences".

On both platforms one can also find on-line cooking experiences.

To use these platforms you need to become a certified host, then you will be able to put your offers and your future clients can make a booking and pay you via this. When you want to use this kind of platform please be aware that they will add their fees to your price. It may vary from 10 to 30 percent.

Please note that booking giants such as **booking.com** and **Airbnb** offer the possibility to book food experiences. You can find it easily on their main site on booking.com, it is called activities and on Airbnb it is named experiences. Although you will find that the majority of them are limited to the major cities, most likely it will develop just as the original booking.com covered only cities' hotels at the very beginning.



Traditional and virtual channels relevant for reaching the customers groups

Every culinary product has a story, and people have always loved stories. Our task is to find such a formula for our narrative and communication and the right channels to reach the right recipients easily. These channels must build bridges of communication that will facilitate the connection between those who are looking for high-quality culinary tourism experiences and those who offer them.

One could say that your story is going to be written, photographed and shared in two equally important parts:

1. The first part is your story about your products, your business, your area and what you offer.
2. The second part has to do with how you pitch or write this story depending on which customer segments you want to appeal to.

For example: a rural bed & breakfast that offers accommodation, traditional meals from local produce, and in a rural setting by a lake or a forest, may appeal to an older customer by highlighting the relaxed and calm surroundings as well as its product. The same B&B may also want to appeal to a younger clientele by highlighting activities that can be done in the forest or at the lake (running, bicycling, swimming or kayaking). Same business, same business model and offers, different message depending on the audience you are communicating with.

Finally, a note on the different channels. Think about your target customer: where will you find them? 40 years old will likely be on Facebook or Instagram whereas 20 years old may be on Twitter or Tik Tok. Knowing your customer and their behaviours will tell you how to reach them and where to reach them.

If we already have experience of culinary tourism, we must ensure its visibility both at the local and regional level and in the entire spectrum available on the Internet. First, we will focus on traditional channels, then we will jump into the virtual world. However, before we arrange individual promotion channels, a few words about the preparation of basic materials: photos, texts and videos.



Preparation for the promotion

Regardless of what promotion channels you want to use, you must remember that you must prepare and be able to provide the highest quality content on an ongoing basis. We are talking here primarily about high-quality photos and videos with good catchy texts. They will be useful to you in both traditional and online promotion channels.

The good news is that most of us have a smartphone, which is now more than enough to take great photos, shoot and edit good videos as well as publish this material on social media. Remember, we eat with our eyes and great video materials sell our product best. It is a smart idea to build a photo base to serve all means of promotion afterwards. You can hire a photographer specialised in food sessions or discover one in yourself.

If you are an enthusiast of good photos, you probably do not need advice in this regard. However, if you have not yet discovered the “photographer in yourself”, pay attention to whether your smartphone has such camera options as “portrait” and “wide-angle photos”. The first option will be needed to take portrait photos of you and the instructors and may as well serve to make photos of dishes. The wide-angle option will allow you to cover the entire room or a larger group of people, which will be very useful for photographing or filming during meetings, workshops, presentations. Remember also that each photo or frame of the film should be like a

picture, have its own theme and thoughtful composition. You can get more tips on food photography, for example, on online courses or during culinary photography workshops, which you can find in your language. If you know that photography is not for you, make sure that your team has someone who likes and can take good culinary photos. You will need them both to show your offer, e.g. in a folder or on your website, as well as to promote your events or offers on an ongoing basis.

In terms of texts, it is worth remembering that people, as a rule, do not like to read much. Therefore, focus on the keywords, and the most important parameters of your offer, such as:

- * Title
- * Duration,
- * Price
- * Availability of the offer, e.g. minimum and maximum number of people, days of the week, methods of booking and payment.



You must do your best to be visible in your region

Especially in places where your potential guests appear. The local channels one cannot miss are listed below.

These are certainly:

- * Tourist information centres and points
- * Restaurants with local and traditional cuisine
- * Shops with local culinary specialties
- * Accommodation including in particular hotels
- * Guesthouses and agri-tourism accommodation

The general rule is not to produce unnecessary waste paper. Do not print at all costs. If we want to publish something in print, then make sure that it is valuable for the customer and will not end up in the rubbish.

A good solution is to make your leaflet or another printed material become a currency eg. by offering a discount to those who come with it. Remember not to make it overwhelming with information. As people do not like to read a lot, “Less is better”. Just do not forget to include an inspiring picture and consider giving some brief description of your offer including minimum requirements for this to happen: eg. minimum group, money range, is the offer year round or periodic and of course how to book an offer. Please use your URL and QR tag to direct them to your website and social media channels.

It is also very important to promote each other among those offering culinary tourism experiences. Cross-promotion

between companies with similar offers is essential to build a common branch that may, in time, develop as a food tourism destination. The power of mutual referrals and promotions should be appreciated. It is worth promoting each other if we only know and can vouch for each other's offer. A form of joint promotion may be, for example, joint maps indicating culinary tourism offers in the area or stands with leaflets indicating the basic parameters of friendly offers. Of course, there are many different forms of mutual promotion using the Internet, which we will mention later.

Build your presence in the tour operators' network. Even if you are a newcomer to the tourism industry, there are specialist companies that organise and sell tourism offers. Therefore you should consider cooperation with tour operators. It is best to enter into cooperation with culinary tourism operators. When looking for them, do not limit yourself only to your region or even country.

If your offer will be based on local culinary culture, it can be an interesting component of a trip for foreign tourists, so it is worth remembering about travel agencies, e.g. from the USA or Germany, specialising in culinary tourism, such as Poland Culinary Vacation (USA), Eat Smart Culinary Travel (USA) or Global Gourmands (USA) or Wolff Travel International (Germany). Of course, it is also worth sending your offer to national or regional operators, the list of which you can ask the regional or national tourist organisation.

Remember also that your culinary tourism experience is also great entertainment and can be part of successful integration events. That is why it is also worth informing about the new offer of event organisers from your region and country. Of course, culinary experiences are also an element of education. Therefore, remember to establish cooperation with educational tourism travel agencies. Depending on the nature of your offer, you can also be an excellent source of education for schools, universities or kindergarten.

When we talk about online channels, we can divide them into two categories. The first is made up of Internet locations that you have to create on your own. The second pillar of your online presence are channels that are thematically related and have been created by other entities. The advantage of the first category is that you have full influence on the form of your presentation, while the second one offers incomparably larger ranges.

There is of course a third category - social media channels where you can reach your dreamed audience with your updated news. Please be well aware that social media are time demanding. You need to provide updated posts at least two times a week. In high season it should be even more frequent like 3-4 times a week. However don't be too pushy to your audience and do not produce Information noise. The good thing is that you can also prepare a social media posts calendar in advance and plan the publication ahead to avoid hectic moves.



Pros and Cons of on-line and off-line promotion channels

Promotion channel category	Pros	Cons
Yours Internet page with the unique domain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full control on content regarding length and quality • Flexibility to choose time of publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building audience from zero • Time and money expensive to create
Other entities channels - eg: regional tourism organisation pages, regional municipality pages, booking platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater reach • Reinforcement by destination brand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited control of date of publication • Adaptation to promotional formats
Social media - : facebook, instagram, tik tok	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to start with and intuitive • Control over time and possibility to plan posts in advance • Easy to use video format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach is limited unless paid • Audiences are increasingly burdened with the amount of information
Print - visit cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low budget • Easy to distribute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited information • Impossible to put photos • Hard to stand out
Print - leaflets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively cheap to print • Ability to show out offer main features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often end up in rubbish • Easy to become outdated • represent little value to customer
Print - catalogues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility to use personalised graphics and photos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively high cost per unit
Print - common folders, maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly interesting due to diversification of information • May serve as a travel planner to tourists • Relatively easier to get funding for printing from the local government, tourist organisations or companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively high cost per unit • Relatively hard to reprint

Chapter 6

What Kind Of Food Tourism Experiences Can You Provide?

What your culinary experience will look like depends on your creativity and your product characteristics. Below you will find some examples of proven offers of culinary tourism experiences that fit perfectly into rural areas:

- * Degustations and all kinds of sampling and tastings enhanced by the storytelling about the quality, history and health properties of the food are the core experience of the food travel service. They use the sense of taste and combine it with a memory of the place which makes the experience unforgettable.
- * Pop up restaurants and cafes are the very best way to jump into the restaurant business in the soft way. They are usually open for a limited period of time e.g. one weekend in a unique places such as: fields, orchards, barns and offer unforgettable memories both for visitors and hosts. When deciding to open such a place make sure you have read safety regulations that exist in your country. Of course a local

restaurant is an excellent place to add value to artisanal products and can be the closing link in the chain of local goods production.

- * Events and festivals related to seasonality, products and working activities in the field or orchard etc. including harvest of vegetable and fruits (eg. excavation, picking apples in the orchard), taste festivals, open door days, harvest festivals.
- * Guided tours, including getting to know raw materials, manufacturing traditions and tasting in: processing plants, breweries, vineyards, cheese dairies, butcheries and sausage factories, fish farms, dairy farms, organic farms etc.
- * Workshops and cooking classes. Focused on food processing and preparation, including: pickling, curing, smoking and preparation of traditional dishes based on local products.

* Food exhibitions and museums dedicated to local and traditional products like bread, moonshine, herring, chess, ham, beer, potato etc. Showing history, food processing and offering degustation of different varieties of local specialties food and drinks.

* Combination of experiences above. They match very well and very often one can find a combination of two or more food experiences served together. The common example is visiting a food or beverage exhibition followed by sampling.

You can find it in many places, in this manual you will find two inspirations from Lithuanian Augai farm and Swedish Eriksgården farm where it is all about berries. The food tasting is enriched with workshops, experiencing the life of the farmer, shopping local goods and having a la carte restaurant. The examples encourage you to feel free to combine the food experiences packages that fits best to your place identity and can be built upon human, time and other resources that you have.

When it comes to virtual culinary tourism service, we need to remember its limitations as it is impossible to send tastes and smells via the internet so far. However, during the covid pandemic when the real food experienced were blocked, lots of on-line possibilities appeared:

On-line cooking classes. It's a great way of getting familiar with dishes and recipes, even from remote cultures as long as we

can take possession of all necessary ingredients. This kind of services can be booked through eg. travelling spoon.

On-line virtual tours in places where traditional food is produced and seasoned. The peak of popularity of virtual tours fell on COVID 19 Pandemic, when culinary tourism guides could not personally guide tourists. During the virtual tour, the guide explains and tells, for example, about parmesan factories in the Emilia Romana region, and the participants listen to it online and can also ask questions. During the covid 19 pandemic, this form of tourism was offered, among others, by the food valley travel company from Parma in Italy.

On-line degustation which is a combination of real and virtual service. It was also highly popular during pandemics as it was used as a company event. In this case participants received a eg. a set of wines from one region and during an on-line meeting sommelier or a wine maker was describing them. The taste, origin and cultivation of particular types of wines.

Taste of place box to order on-line - Specially selected selection of local products such as yellow cheeses, cold cuts, vegetable pastes, olive oils, cookies, honey, wines, etc. Jointly packaged and accompanied by a story about the place of origin and manufacturers to be ordered on-line. It can also be combined with a recipe for a local dish and on-line instruction on how to prepare it.

Although we can not indicate a complex example of on-line tourism experience in the Baltic Sea Region we can find very good virtual tours in the Estonian wine manor Allikukivi.

How to launch new food tourism experience step by step

One of the key reasons why we highly recommend developing your own culinary tourism service is the emergence of high added value to your rural production. Another important aspect is becoming independent or at least less dependent on one recipient of your product and diversifying sales channels. This, of course, involves shortening supply chains and the path from field to fork.

A very good example of added value and emerging a new market for the product are the eel parties that derive from old tradition called The Ålagille in the region of Skåne in Sweden. They were typically organised in late August and the celebration consisted of trying six different dishes from eel.

Now, eel is a very expensive and rare fish as it's close to extinction. The fishermen from Skåne offer the simplified version of eel parties as the way to get to know the product and tradition. Instead of selling the fish to a purchaser, intermediary or on the market they sell the event with the eel as the theme. During the party tourists will hear of the tradition, history and local culture and taste a sample e. g. of 100 grammes of the great fish paying as for the whole kilogram.

Here you will find a practical guide that will lead you step by step in preparing a professional food tourism offer with key steps to launch culinary tourism offer;

Choosing a topic

The first step you should take when designing your culinary tourism service is to choose a unique topic to work with. This is the foundation of your offer. The stronger it is connected with the place of origin and tradition, the easier it will be to build a service based on it.

For many of you the choice is going to be obvious. Your product will be the Queen. However sometimes you will have to choose from the vast portfolio of produced goods as for instance when you run a big family farm. Then you can choose to demonstrate your approach to it. No matter what product or theme you will choose, please remember to guarantee guests that they will find an original experience meeting you or your family and tasting your food: the main reason they will travel is to experience locality and authenticity.

Choosing the best product, please remember to emphasise its connection with destination of origin. Your service will be your long-term investment. To build on rock, take care of guaranteeing the uniqueness of the product. It is best to support it with a certificate, e.g. the Culinary Heritage network, national proof of authenticity or EU certificate of protected geographical indication or any of recognised proofs of quality.

Having provided this, you can start investing in the new service. It is good to be aware of the need for protection because otherwise you may meet many imitators in the future who will cut coupons from your idea and work.

Setting the venue

It is also necessary to provide adequate facilities for receiving guests and designing a comprehensive guest experience. Please remember that you are now switching from producer to service supplier and that you will be operating in the hospitality industry which demands very good preparation. You should design a step by step trail of the group visiting your company and attending the food experience.

What you now are obligated to design is the customer's journey map at your venue. Please wear the customer glasses and look at your venue as the total newcomer. Check carefully all the aspects that the tourists will see and meet while visiting you. Start with checking if your yard is tidy and aesthetically pleasing but don't forget about other aspects listed below.

No matter what kind of service you will decide to implement your surrounding will need to meet people's basic needs such as:

- * Getting informed on how to drive or get there (signage on the road and on yours property with your company or experience name on it)

- * Parking their car safely (the best is to have a dedicated car park with the capacity to park a car or to stop a bus).
- * Washing their hands and using the restroom (the toilet should be clean and separate from other functions such as household)
- * Taking nice photos and video (it means you should take care of good light quality and tidy surrounding to be sure the picture would look great it is also welcomed to indicate the most photogenic places as well as train your stuff in taking pictures)
- * Buying some souvenirs (selling the experience is the great lever to sell the food product portfolio such as a small sample of yours and other authentic local products).
- * Method of payment they will be able to use (please make sure that you are able to offer a cash free payment, not necessarily paying by card but please consider smartphone payments such as Blik as an alternative)

When you decide to prepare a specific service, you must take extra care of the best preparation of the place. Depending on the kind of the service you are going to implement you will need to adopt different spaces to host guests. Below you will find a road map on how to adopt your production spaces for tourist's needs.

Food workshops, culinary shows, cooking classes, degustation with your product in the main role you will most likely need:

- * A comfortable workshop and tasting place for a group of a dozen to twenty people. If you have one extra room no smaller than 40 square metres, it may be good enough, however two separate rooms of at least 25-30 metres would work even better. Of course if you can dedicate a bigger space e.g. 80-90 square metres if you have the possibility.
- * When arranging the workshop space, this means preparing, for example, two 5-6 meter tables, at which up to 20 people will be able to work at the same time. Such tables should be quite wide, i.e. measure from 80 to 120 cm and have a fairly high worktop (about 80 to 100 cm from the floor level). An additional third table should be prepared for the workshop or show leader. Such a space should be equipped with a sink, at least two induction cookers, a trash can and full kitchen equipment to prepare the desired menu.
- * It is also worth having a separate place for eating meals or for tasting. It should provide comfortable space for guests, e.g. one common bench. When arranging it, it is worth taking care of the local characteristics of the decor and the presentation of your own as well as those from other local manufacturers.
- * It's absolutely best to have it arranged indoors, but if you are planning to operate only in the tourist season you can easily start with a shed. Very reasonable is to adopt an old barn, stable or another farm's building as it will add some authentic value to your offer.

Guided tours in your processing plant. Places for food production are often covered by a special sanitary regime. But do not worry, with proper preparation, you will be able to serve a tour of plants, even with such a strict production regime as cheese factories or dairies. However, you must absolutely remember about:

- * Designation of a sightseeing route that does not interfere with production and does not pose a threat to occupational health and safety.
- * Preparation of protective clothing for visitors, e.g. disposable caps and protective aprons.
- * Setting up shop with locally produced products and culinary souvenirs related to your product, e.g. kitchen aprons, gloves, cookbooks, etc.
- * Visiting farms, orchards, vineyards, etc. Preparing a farm, field or orchard for the needs of tourists is not difficult, although it requires proper attractiveness of space. Remember to prepare and describe your crops well according to the principle: "to see you need to know":
- * Design a visual and spatial identification system for your place and describe the main roads, parts of the farm, and cultivated species. Do not spare information about the characteristics of varieties, the history of the farm, local specifics, e.g. soils or climate.

- * Take care of the quality and uniform character of pedestrian routes, i.e. paths and roads inside the farm, use the best local, natural materials such as stone and gravel.
- * Prepare interesting small architecture, sheds, benches and tables, do not forget that quality and convenience is also part of your service.
- * Remember that your farms are often also picturesque photo locations. Frame, literally and figuratively, the most beautiful views and encourage tourists to take photos with them.

Food museums which are excellent forms of presentation of culinary heritage based on culinary products are becoming increasingly popular. Preparing them does not have to be difficult. If you are passionate about a specific local product and have the desire to prepare an engaging exhibition about them, this can be a great idea for an innovative culinary tourism service in your area. To open them you may need:

- * Exhibition space and exhibits related to the history of manufacturing your product.
- * Multimedia presentations about the product, e.g. touch screen, video display monitor or audio guide to tell your story. Of course you will need also to prepare an engaging content eg. make a simple movie on product history, which may require some effort but most likely you will be able to produce it on your smartphone if one of your team members is comfortable with the current technology.

* Space for workshops and tasting

* Souvenir shop

Preparing the show & personnel

In the hospitality and leisure industry, which includes culinary tourism, the role of the staff is crucial. In a restaurant, it is the waiter who advises, serves the dish and becomes as important as the chef in creating unforgettable culinary memories. In the hotel, the quality of service at the reception has a significant impact on the satisfaction with the stay. During an organised trip abroad, whether we understand what we see depends on a good guide who will tell us and give us the competence to understand the world visited. Therefore it is very important that the success of your offer will be how professionally your staff will play the new role of a culinary tourism guide and that is what we will call it here.

The key qualities of a good culinary guide are openness, courtesy and professionalism. The person serving tourists must like contact with new people. Kindly answer their questions and understand their needs. These are essential qualities that are difficult to develop overnight. Therefore, not every producer or farmer will feel comfortable in the role of a frontman serving tourist traffic and it is okay. If you're not that type of person, consider delegating this role to someone else. Maybe one of your co-workers or adult children will be happy to take up the challenge. Before you choose the right leader, try

to take part in a culinary experience with this person, similar to what you want to offer, e.g. in a culinary workshop or visiting a farm on a culinary trail.

The professionalism of the service should include, among other things, a corporate outfit that must be clean and tidy and match your culinary product and surroundings. For example, a chequered flannel shirt and denim trousers will suit most of the culinary tourism experience in the countryside, such as a farm or orchard tour. For the leaders of workshops and culinary shows, a better outfit will be an apron with the company name embroidered. The most important thing, however, is that they are impeccably clean, things that look like new and are not used for other production or field work.

The person serving guests should also have an ID with a first name, optionally a last name.

If your offer is to participate in a culinary workshop, prepare a nice apron for participants that matches your idea. Also make sure that you have at least two sets of them and remember to wash them before accepting new guests.

Preparing the show and the role for the staff and guests is a must. Your new service is a kind of show where the script and roles must be carefully thought out and executed. What guests hear from the host should be carefully thought out and written in advance. This means that each service should have at least such parts as:

- * Introduction with a story about the local context, traditions, history of the plant and farm.
 - * Development in which participants learn about the product, its secrets, ask questions and participate in interaction, e.g. harvesting, workshop or culinary show, tasting, etc.
- Regardless of the product and topic you choose, the tourist experience must be dynamic, preferably engaging all 5 senses. Therefore, it is worth asking yourself how each of the senses will be active during our experience, starting from sight, hearing, touch, smell and ending with taste. It is also worth referring to the sixth sense, i.e. memory, e.g. by recalling common memories, e.g. regarding culinary traditions that tourists can connect with a product or category of products. This is the core of our experience and it is this part of the preparation that deserves the most attention. Success in every other field, including sales or marketing, results from the quality of the sensory tourist's experience.

Conclusion

This is the time to talk with tourists about the possibility of buying products and related souvenirs. Recreating elements of survival, e.g. independently at home. Refer partners offering other culinary experiences in your area or on your route. Do not forget about a casual gift for guests or your business card or leaflet, all in order to build relationships with guests. In this phase, they should get to know your social media, online store, newsletter and other forms of contact with you.

Trying and testing

You don't need to be perfect. If all is working then you are ready to host tourists. Having prepared all this, you need to learn by doing. You will achieve the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) that you need to improve listening to your customers and coworkers.

It is good to conduct a couple of trials by inviting colleagues and friends in order to collect feedback on its course. This will certainly allow you to significantly improve the product. The next step may be to invite the local tourism industry and business partners with whom you plan to cooperate, they will also provide you with valuable comments.

This phase may repeat several times but please be well aware of it as you are adjusting better and better to the new market niche that will bring you new sources of income.

The last but not least is to establish cooperation between partners and build common initiatives. Good examples are the food trials, combined offers of culinary travel excursions and food festivals. This aspect will be covered in the next part of the BASCIL manual.





Chapter 7

Cost calculation

Your new culinary tourism service is to provide you with entertainment, reasons to be proud, but also economic gain. It is to contribute to the diversification of your company's offer. It should also ultimately allow you to get higher added value from the unit of your product, even than direct sales. It is estimated that by changing the business model from the sale of raw materials, e.g. apples, to the sale of a product, e.g. cider directly on your farm, the profit may increase 5-6 times.

The same applies to the transition from selling a product to providing a product-based service. It is assumed that this form of activity is associated with the highest profits for manufacturers. It is assumed to be particularly profitable in rural areas, where the costs of business and living are often much lower, and the prices of well-prepared culinary experiences can be comparable to the prices of, for example, culinary workshops in cities.

When calculating the price of your culinary experience, remember to take into account variable and fixed costs, as well as the new flow of money resulting from the sale of culinary tourism services. Remember that you should consider the new venture in the perspective of at least the next 5 years.

Depending on your location and determination, your business may be seasonal, most likely during the summer holidays. However, if you are located no further than 1.5-2 hours drive from a large urban centre and the nature of your service allows it, you can try year-round activities. Then it will be possible to open up to corporate and educational clients.

Variable costs:

- * The biggest will be the cost of the employee, of course, if you do not decide to conduct meetings with tourists yourself
- * Costs of own and third-party culinary products
- * Marketing costs including payment for advertising campaigns, distribution and printing of leaflets
- * The cost of utilities needed to provide the service, including electricity, heating, water
- * Cleaning costs

Fixed costs:

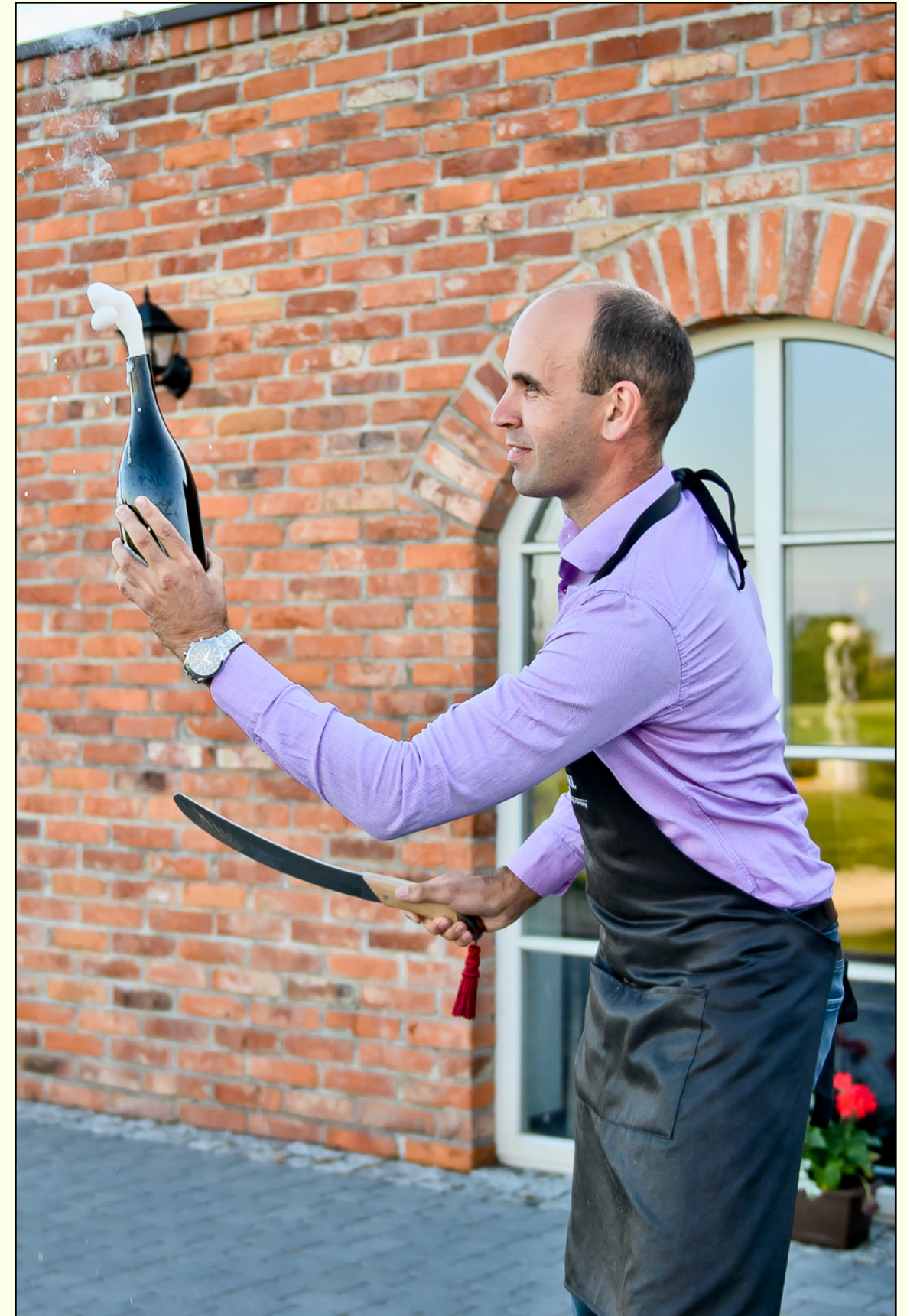
- * Rent or mortgage instalments related to the use of a specific room
- * The costs of preparing the surroundings and rooms to host tourists
- * One-off costs of preparing marketing tools, including the website, graphic identification, including the logo

Opportunity costs:

- * That is, the costs of lost profits due to other use of your premises, time, capital.

Inclusion of new revenues such as:

- * Sale of new services to target groups of individual tourists, group tourists, company groups.
- * Increase in sales of your base products and new culinary souvenirs to tourists
- * On-line sales of your products





Chapter 8

Findings Piloting Company Level

In 2024 the BASCIL project conducted a piloting in the Baltic Sea area where 88 companies in 12 piloting regions participated. Certain findings from the company reports can be very useful in company level as best practices.

All in all, these pilot projects validate the viability of combining food production and culinary tourism as a pathway to:

- * Increase short-food-chain awareness,
- * Enhance farm income, and
- * Strengthen rural communities by appealing to both domestic and (in many cases) international visitors.

Moving forward, success will depend on each producer's willingness to refine logistical details, maintain quality of visitor experiences, and collaborate within their region—ultimately ensuring that the synergy between farming, food, and tourism continues to grow.

Overall Conclusions

Culinary Tourism as a Growth Driver

- Despite varied scales (small family farms vs. more established food SMEs), nearly all pilots found that adding or refining culinary tourism experiences (e.g., tasting events, farm tours, cooking workshops) boosted brand visibility and direct sales.
- On-farm experiences and events proved especially important in countries with strict alcohol or marketing regulations, providing a unique way to “tell the story” behind products.

Seasonal & Off-Season Innovation

- Many producers successfully addressed their “low season” by developing new activities (e.g., cooking classes, indoor tastings, orchard/winery tours for small groups).
- Off-season experiences helped stabilise revenue throughout the year, even if these services brought smaller, more intimate visitor groups.

Collaboration & Cooperative Models

- Several pilots showed that joining forces—whether through a cooperative (e.g., “Provinces Produkti” in Latvia), local tourist boards, or cross-promotional events—amplified impact.
- Shared stands at festivals, pop-up markets, or “farm clusters” allowed small producers to pool resources, draw bigger crowds, and offer richer visitor experiences.

Direct-to-Consumer Channels

- Pop-up stores, local festival participation, e-shops, and even vending machines (for fresh beef in Latvia) connected producers to consumers eager for short-food-chain transparency.
- By combining onsite tastings with product sales, many SMEs found that visitors purchased more after learning the backstory and sampling the goods.

Time & Capacity Constraints

- The major limiting factor for almost every farmer or small producer was balancing production work with new tourism tasks (hosting groups, marketing events, travel to fairs).
- Often, a single family or a very small team runs the entire operation—leading to scheduling bottlenecks and limited ability to expand tourism offerings quickly.



Key Lessons Learned

Hands-On Experiences Drive Engagement

- Workshops (cheese- or bread-making, beef or fish cooking, orchard/winery tours) significantly boosted visitor satisfaction.
- Interactive elements - like nature trails with QR-code quizzes, the chance to pick garden produce, or direct contact with animals - created memorable impressions and stronger word-of-mouth.

Well-Targeted Packages & Tiered Offerings

- Several wineries and farms introduced multiple package tiers to cater to different audiences (e.g., small private groups, larger tour operators, families with kids).

- Tailoring the content (e.g., simpler cooking for families, advanced tasting notes for foodies) increased appeal and repeat business.

Off-Farm & Collaborative Events Matter

- Producer success was not limited to on-farm visits alone. Pop-up stands at regional festivals or community markets exposed them to new clientele, effectively acting as mobile “brand ambassadors.”
- Partnerships with local restaurants, manors, or other attractions created multi-stop routes—a strong draw for organised tour groups.

Importance of Storytelling & Education

- In pilot after pilot, visitors proved very receptive to the farm’s or winery’s narrative: sustainable methods, animal welfare, local traditions, or historical building tours.
- Educational components (nature conservation, pollinators, “field to fork” demonstrations) added intangible value and justified premium product pricing.

Infrastructure & Marketing Support

- Even relatively small investments—a pop-up sales stand, bilingual signage, simplified workshop spaces—helped producers accommodate guests more smoothly.
- Where external mentors/consultants provided marketing assistance (e.g., branding, social media promotion, website translations), visitor numbers and sales typically rose.



Recommendations for Future Development

Scale Up Incrementally

- Start with small, high-quality experiences (e.g., weekend workshops or seasonal pop-ups), then expand capacity and frequency as staff and facilities allow.
- Avoid overcommitting to large visitor groups if the farm infrastructure or staff is not yet ready.

Strengthen Cooperative or Thematic Clusters

- Clustering with neighbouring producers, local tourism boards, or thematically similar farms (e.g., “wine route,”

“cheese trail”) appeals to visitors seeking diverse, all-in-one regional experiences.

- Consider joint marketing, shared booking platforms, and cross-promotional events.

Engage Tour Operators & Local Tourism Centers

- For wineries, breweries, or farms near tourist routes, forging ongoing relations with tour operators ensures a consistent flow of group bookings.
- In rural regions, official tourism info centers can highlight farm visits or tasting packages as part of their recommended itineraries.

Combine Digital & On-Site Sales

- Festivals and on-farm workshops drive interest but also funnel new customers to e-commerce sites, subscription services, or direct farm pick-ups.
- Maintain user-friendly online presence (social media, e-shop) to retain visitors' loyalty after their trip.

Keep Innovating & Diversifying

- Some farms are adding new experiences (e.g., fish smoking, orchard-based cooking, nature trails with interactive technology).
- Ongoing creativity fosters repeat visitation—visitors return to see “what’s new” each season.





Showcasing Inspiration from the Regions

On the following pages, we present a selection of piloted companies - one from each of the regions participating in the project. These businesses offer inspiring examples of how food and beverage producers can successfully open their doors to visitors and create meaningful tourism experiences. While many more excellent initiatives could have been included, this selection highlights a diverse range of approaches and creative solutions developed during the piloting phase.

The regions that have been participating in the piloting were the following, these clusters in the project have also been named for future collaboration; **The Norwegian Cider Route West Coast (NO), Latvian Taste Researchers Route (LV), Latvian Cider Route (LV), Jõgevamaa Sets the Table (EE), Estonian Wine Trail (EE), Stone Road (LT), ManufakTOURen-MV (DE), The Essence of Skåne (SE), Timeless Flavors (LT), Taste of Lubuskie (PL), Saimaa Culinary Network (FI) and Taste Pomorskie (PL).**



Abava Winery

www.abavas.lv



Set in the picturesque Abava River Valley in Kurzeme, Abava Winery is Latvia's largest winery and cidery, offering a distinct northern take on fruit wines, ciders, and distillates. Inspired by a honeymoon tour of Europe's historic wineries, the founders brought that dream home—creating a destination that blends Old World tradition with bold Baltic character. Their 4-hectare orchard includes Soviet-era apple varieties, lending heritage depth to their award-winning ciders. Visitors can explore the estate, learn about cider-making, and taste a range of innovative blends enriched with northern berries and herbs. Seasonal activities like apple picking add an interactive touch, while tailored group tastings with snacks and catering make the experience welcoming year-round. Abava also hosts private events and corporate gatherings, showing how product-focused tourism can grow into a vibrant, full-service destination.



Bread Lady

<https://youtu.be/mhX-md9yiGM>



In the Klaipėda district of Lithuania, culinary heritage comes to life through Vida Viskontienė - affectionately known as the “Bread Lady.” A passionate keeper of Žemaitija’s food traditions, she offers immersive tasting experiences called Žemaitiškų patiekalų degustacija, where guests can sample authentic dishes like cibulynė (onion soup), spirginė (bacon chips), and kastinys (a seasoned dairy spread). More than just a meal, each session is an educational journey into the stories, customs, and techniques behind these ancient flavours. Vida’s deep-rooted knowledge and heartfelt storytelling create a genuine cultural experience, perfect for both individual visitors and organised groups. Her initiative demonstrates how tradition-based culinary offerings can serve as powerful tools for rural tourism and heritage preservation. Every dish tells a story - and with Vida, you truly taste history.





Located in Lake Ivö in northeastern Skåne, Ivögården is a family-run countryside retreat where food, nature, and hospitality come together. With a small vineyard on-site, the farm offers a rare opportunity to explore wine cultivation in southern Sweden, adding depth to its farm-to-table concept. Visitors can take part in seasonal cooking classes, guided tastings, and food experiences rooted in local tradition. From harvesting vegetables in the garden to preparing shared meals, guests are encouraged to engage with food from soil to plate. Ivögården also features rural accommodation and a cozy farm shop filled with regional products. The focus on sustainability, authenticity, and personal interaction creates a warm, memorable setting for both individual travellers and small groups. Ivögården is a model of how small-scale rural enterprises can turn everyday farming into meaningful tourism experiences.



Kannelniemi Farm



Situated on the scenic shore of Lake Saimaa, Kannelniemi Farm offers an authentic slice of Finnish countryside life. Specialising in highland cattle, the farm hosts a popular spring event where visitors can witness the joyful release of cows onto summer pastures—an everyday farm task turned into a memorable experience. Paired with a pop-up dining concept, the event draws around 150 guests annually, blending food, nature, and rural tradition into one engaging moment. Especially beloved by families, it offers children and adults alike the chance to connect with farm life in a fun, educational way. By turning seasonal routines into welcoming public events, Kannelniemi shows how even small-scale farms can create meaningful tourism offerings through creativity and community engagement. It's a model of how authenticity, simplicity, and thoughtful design can bring the charm of rural Finland to life.



MÄNNERHOBBY

www.maennerhobby.eu



Located in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, MÄNNERHOBBY is the region's largest experience distillery and brewery - where natural ingredients meet authentic, handcrafted quality. Known for its award-winning KALAND Kümmel and KRUM Rum, the company has earned over 250 international accolades for its bold coastal flavour profiles. Visitors can step behind the scenes to explore the art of brewing and distilling through guided tours, hands-on workshops, and curated tastings that showcase a diverse range of spirits, liqueurs, and craft beers. Beyond production, MÄNNERHOBBY offers an immersive guest experience with regular events, a well-stocked shop featuring their own creations and local products, and an inviting in-house restaurant. This combination of craftsmanship, education, and hospitality creates a strong model for turning high-quality production into engaging, year-round rural tourism.



Malinówka Farm

www.facebook.com/malinowkapl



With a deep love for nature and local ingredients, Malinówka Farm has turned its small-scale fruit and berry wine production into an inspiring “forest to table” experience. Their wild cuisine workshops invite visitors on foraging walks through nearby woodlands, followed by nature-immersed, communal cooking sessions. These seasonal workshops—tested in smaller groups—quickly gained popularity and sold out, proving a strong demand for hands-on, nature-based culinary experiences. The concept not only introduces participants to wild foods and traditional flavours but also strengthens the bond between people and place. By combining sustainable foraging, storytelling, and food culture, Malinówka shows how rural producers can bridge seasonality gaps and engage visitors beyond standard tastings. Their success highlights the potential of niche, experience-rich tourism for small farms with creativity and heart.



Meemeistrid

www.meemeistrid.ee



In Põltsamaa, Central Estonia, Meemeistrid has turned a former dumping ground into a buzzing honey paradise. This family-run farm now offers Estonia's widest selection of wild honey flavors and a rich visitor experience rooted in creativity, sustainability, and heartfelt storytelling. At the beautifully restored Honey Dairy (MeeMeierei), guests can choose from themed programs like Sweet Friends, perfect for relaxed group tastings; Little Bees, an educational and fun adventure for families; or Queen, a tailored premium visit for corporate groups. Each experience blends flavor with narrative—sharing the journey of Meemeistrid while showcasing unique varieties like Black Garlic Honey or Sea Buckthorn & Blackcurrant DUO. Suitable for families, friend groups, or culinary tourists, Meemeistrid proves how product storytelling and playful experiences can make a local food brand truly unforgettable.



Podole Wielkie Distillery

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www.visitdistillery.pl



In the heart of Pomerania, Podole Wielkie Distillery invites visitors to explore a unique legacy of spirit-making that spans over 170 years. As Poland's only distillery cultivating its own grains and potatoes, the entire production process—from field to bottle—is carefully managed on-site. Guests can dive into the world of Polish okowita and vodka during a two-hour guided experience, learning about forgotten distillation traditions and tasting the results of true craftsmanship. The tour showcases how heritage, innovation, and regional identity come together in every bottle. Set amid scenic surroundings, the distillery has become a destination for those seeking authentic flavours and deeper insight into Poland's artisanal spirits. Podole Wielkie is a compelling example of how agricultural roots can be transformed into high-value tourism rooted in transparency, quality, and storytelling.



Provinces Produkti

www.provincesprodukti.lv



In the heart of Kurzeme, Provinces Produkti is more than a cooperative—it's a celebration of Latvian food heritage brought to life by dedicated farmers and producers. Each product tells a story, shaped by tradition, passion, and a deep connection to the land. Visitors can explore authentic flavours at the Saldus market shop, meet the makers, and discover local delicacies rooted in generations of know-how. Farm and homestead visits provide a firsthand look at how food is grown and crafted, blending old practices with new techniques. Special events and catering services offer curated culinary experiences where local ingredients are transformed into unforgettable meals. Whether visiting a market stall or attending a catered event, guests encounter more than just food—they experience the Latvian spirit. Provinces Produkti shows how collaboration and cultural pride can turn local food into a compelling tourism offer.





Perched along the Hardangerfjord in Ulvik, Syse Gard is a family-run farm that has been cultivating fruit and raising sheep for six generations. As part of the renowned Fruit and Cider Route, the farm offers visitors an authentic taste of Norwegian agricultural traditions. The on-site farm shop brims with homemade products, including apple juice, jams, canned plums, and traditionally cured lamb meats like fenalår and sausages—all crafted using time-honored methods. From June to August, the summer café invites guests to savour local delicacies such as the farm's own cider paired with meat platters or "Besto si eplekake" (Grandma's apple cake) with ice cream. Guided tours provide insights into fruit cultivation and preservation, allowing visitors to connect deeply with the farm's heritage. Syse Gard exemplifies how preserving and sharing local food traditions can create enriching and sustainable tourism experiences.





What started as a hobby has grown into a unique business that celebrates Lithuania's oldest alcoholic drink—mead. Šušvės Midus offers year-round tasting experiences under the inviting name “Mead River Flowed...”, where visitors dive into the history, production, and cultural value of mead. The program includes the tasting of ten different varieties, paired with homemade cheese and honey for a full sensory journey. Whether held at the mead production site or arranged at a customer's location, each session tells the story of mead from past to present. Guests can also purchase products such as fresh honey, wax, bee bread, and handmade candles—making the visit both educational and memorable. Šušvės Midus demonstrates how tradition and storytelling can be transformed into an engaging tourism offer and how even the most niche product can find its audience by inviting people to taste, learn, and connect.



Uue-Saaluse Winery

www.uuesaaluseveinitalu.ee



In the peaceful landscape of Haanja Nature Park by Lake Alajärv, Uue-Saaluse Winery invites visitors into the world of small-scale winemaking rooted in nature. Biologists Mati and Maris Kivistik turned their passion for biodiversity into a business, creating wines from local berries, fruits, and open-field grapes. Each variety is handcrafted with care—guided by Maris’ sommelier skills and Mati’s fascination with vines.

Guests can enjoy guided wine tours tailored for different interests—be it romantic getaways, group outings, or gourmet tastings. Fun extras like wine-themed quizzes and catered experiences add to the charm. Uue-Saaluse is a strong example of how sustainable values, storytelling, and regional identity can evolve into an inspiring tourism offer.

Their success shows what’s possible when a family-run business opens its doors to curious visitors in a unique and natural setting.





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