

Food for thought

MOO-ve over porridge and haggis ... Research highlighted by VisitScotland shows that Scottish beef appeals to consumers more than traditional porridge oats, haggis and Scottish salmon, according to a press release.

A topic paper published recently by the national tourism organisation – which pulls together recent food and drink research from a variety of sources to explore the role of food and drink in the visitor experience – shows that Scottish Beef tops a list of Scottish food for its appeal, with 60% of consumers surveyed preferring beef over Scottish salmon (51%), porridge oats (40%), haggis (27%) and berries (27%).*

The research also reveals that almost 6 in 10 consumers (57%) most look forward to having tea at a local café, while 56% said that eating fish and chips outside particularly appealed to them during a holiday. **

And whilst German visitors love a dram while visiting a whisky distillery as part of their trip (50%), Scots are most likely to prefer a good old British picnic (33%) in the great outdoors, whereas Australians favour a good night out (61%) while on holiday in the country.***

The latest topic paper from VisitScotland's Insight Team has been welcomed by industry leaders, including Scotland Food & Drink. Published on www.visitscotland.org the paper uses information from a range of sources to explore the role of food and drink in the visitor experience.

Almost all – 92% of visitors – dine out during a holiday to Scotland and VisitScotland is encouraging tourism businesses to consider food and drink offerings as a way to significantly enhance the visitor experience and make Scotland a destination of choice for quality food and drink.

Other insights include:

87% of UK holiday-goers think that their food and drink experience is important while on holiday.

When on holiday in Scotland, 43% of visitors speak to locals to guide and influence their choice of places to eat out.

Visitors believe that trying local food is an integral part of the visitor experience with 78% agreeing that they like to find out about local food and dishes unique to the destination when on holiday.

55% of visitors to Scotland try local food, while 46% try local drink.

86% of visitors from the US try local food.

With the range of food and drink opportunities available in Scotland, from dining out to visiting a whisky distillery, participating in a local food trail or attending a food and drink event, satisfaction with food and drink is also high amongst visitors, especially among international visitors.

Malcolm Roughead, VisitScotland Chief Executive said:

“The latest insights from VisitScotland are taken from a range of sources and show, without a doubt, the importance of food and drink to Scottish tourism. Visitors spend around £995million on eating and drinking when they’re on holiday in Scotland.

“Scotland is ideally positioned with its rich natural larder and world famous products like Scottish beef, Scottish salmon, haggis, whisky and gin, cheese and porridge oats, to continue to rise to the challenge and give visitors food and drink experiences to remember.

“Our research shows that our visitors’ experience of food and

drink consistently outweighs their expectation but there is a real opportunity for hoteliers, restaurants, cafés and other food operators to provide and clearly promote Scottish food and drink on their menus. This can directly benefit the businesses, as well as pushing our food and drink offering further up the visitor agenda to make Scotland a destination of choice for quality food and drink experiences.

“Food and Drink is an integral part of the visitor experience and, by working together, we can promote the rich and seasonally variable larder and show that Scotland is well placed to excel in the provision of locally sourced, high quality food and drink products for visitors from near and far.”

James Withers, Chief Executive of Scotland Food & Drink, said: “Food and drink is a real jewel in Scotland’s crown and this research highlights the growing importance of food and drink to our tourism offer and experience.

“Scottish food and drink is increasingly showcased around the world, from top bars in New York to high-end restaurants in Hong Kong. Yet, despite great progress over recent years, more can still be done to embrace Scottish produce at home and celebrate what is produced on our doorstep. We want visitors, no matter what part of Scotland they visit or where they come from, to get the opportunity to enjoy our amazing local produce.

“We are working closely with VisitScotland and the Scottish Tourism Alliance to develop a National Food Tourism Plan for Scotland, to cement Scotland’s place on the global culinary map. Doing that will boost the fortunes of both our food & drink and tourism industries, whose futures are more closely linked than ever.”

The VisitScotland Taste Our Best accreditation scheme recognises and celebrates businesses who provide locally

sourced, quality food and drink. More than 1,000 accommodation providers, visitor attractions as well as restaurants, cafés and takeaways across Scotland already belong to the programme across Scotland.

Launched in September 2013, Taste Our Best is a joint initiative between the national tourism organisation and the Scottish Government. Assessors rate the overall eating experience, the extent to which Scottish produce is used and promoted, and staff knowledge of the produce on the menu and its provenance.

* YouGov UK omnibus for VisitScotland, 2014

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*** Scotland Visitor Survey 2015/2016

Photo: Scottish Beef tops a list of Scottish food for its appeal. Photographer: Kenny Lam.

Grand Café – a history of Norwegian Culture

It is with great pride that Fursetgruppen and Grand Café Oslo welcome new and old guests once again to Grand Café restaurant and their wine cellar. The doors open on Thursday 20th October

at 4pm. Both Fursetgruppen and Grand Café Oslo are humble and proud to help continue and create a new cultural history with Grand Café.

-We've been looking forward to finally being able to reopen Grand Café and we are happy to welcome everyone back, says Marketing and Communications manager in Fursetgruppen restaurant group, Marianne Nygård-Hansen.

Grand Café

The new Grand Café will be a restaurant with a unique atmosphere. High ceilings and grand spaces are ready to welcome old and new guests. The two head chefs Alexander Østli Berg and Christofer Bengtsson are in charge of the kitchen staff.

The kitchen is open plan so that guests can view the chefs preparing food using ingredients mainly from Scandinavia but with guest appearances from other parts of the world. The head chefs focus on great flavours and hints at exciting dishes.

-The team is really looking forward to seeing how Grand Café will once again come alive and become Oslo's natural hot spot. It will be great to experience a fully and newly renovated Grand Café, and to hear the guests' opinions on both the food and the décor. We hope that we will surprise everyone – positively, says general manager Anine Tennøe.

The wine cellar

Now you can find a large, open wine cellar in what was previously the Bonanza nightclub at Grand Hotel. A wine concept with room for a considerable collection of great wines at different prices. You can enjoy a glass of wine in cosy and rustic surroundings while eating snacks like ham and cheese from the bar. Led by chef sommelier

Fabio Borgianni who has broad experience from different food and wine concepts. The wine cellar will also be home to small and large parties, wine tastings and wine courses and has two séparées of different sizes.

The history

We've focused on keeping the historic lines by for example uncovering and recreating Lars Backer's decorated ceilings in addition to renovating the Thonet chairs which have been a Grand Café staple for decades. At the same time we have focused on the interior decorating with contemporary references to create a Grand Café not only embracing history but also today. Guests can marvel over the sight of the three famous Krohg paintings that are still present and even more visible today. Art history is still an integral part of the space and our goal is for it to be passed on by people from the present. We greatly respect history, but at the same time it is our responsibility to create a Grand Café suitable for our time.

– Our starting point has been the colourful people and interesting diversity of guests from all parts of society who have visited Grand Café. The restaurant has been a unique meeting point and an arena for socializing, regardless of social position, for over a 100 years. Several of these characters are visible in the painting "Kristianiabohemen" by Per Krogh – well-known authors, artists and other central people living their spiritual lives at Grand Café towards the end of the 19th century. We've focused on interior décor, communications solutions and a visual expression for continuing and managing the cultural inheritance, says Bjørn Tore Furset, owner of Fursetgruppen.

To embrace history further a photo art direction has also been developed as a supplement to the painting – as a clear reference between past and present. Norwegian photographer Baard Lunde is behind the photos that can be found on different surfaces, like the foyer.



Top photo: Christian Rignes and Bjørn Tore Furset by Eivind

Taksrud

Photos below by Stian Broch

HSMIAI Region Europe Profile: Olav Lie-Nilsen

Olav Lie-Nilsen

**Hotel owner and Director, Farmer and
Entrepreneur**

Thorbjørnrud hotel

Olav Lie-Nilsen is a visionary and active entrepreneur who took over the Thorbjørnrud hotel at Jevnaker outside Oslo in Norway in 2008. He has since developed the hotel to an establishment widely renowned for its food and beverage profile, demonstrating a tireless go-ahead spirit for Norwegian agriculture and food production, among other things through the purchase of the worn-out smallholding Øvre Kjekshus, a few kilometres from the hotel. The smallholding has been transformed into a well-run farm, supplying the hotel with meat and cheese. Earlier this month the Norwegian organisation for rural tourism, farm food and inland fishing, HANEN, selected him as This Year's Local Food Entrepreneur 2016. This week he shared his thoughts and experiences with HSMIAI members and others attending the second annual HSMIAI Region Europe event in Dublin, Ireland.

Q: What does a day at work consist of for you?

A: It is varied, starting at 05:30 am, some coffee, emails I

didn't catch the previous day. Work in the cowshed from 06:00 to 11:00. If I can, I take a trip to Thorbjørnrud, pop into the office, check the mail, bills, reports and figures, then a few rounds around the house to see if everything's in order, an immense amount of lightbulbs to change and chairs to put in place, talk to the employees, or external or internal meetings.

Then a quick visit to the cheese factory to check on things, take stock of the storage and discuss production with the cheese maker. If I'm next in line to present the menu and serve as host, I'm usually in the hotel at night, depending on farm duties. It is an all-too rare activity, as I find it something of a favourite. I travel a lot in order to promote Thorbjørnrud, networking or acquiring qualifications. Also, I spend a lot of time passing on food and meal culture, to groups on the house and in other forums.

Q: What's the best part of your job?

A: That I'm free to be my own master, influencing 100 percent on my own workday. There's always a challenge at hand, so I feel that I get to use my skills and qualities.

Q: Do you have any nice traditions at your office?

A: Coffee and fibbing with Kjetil and the rest of the lot.

Q: How long have you been a member of HSMIAI?

A: I got to know HSMIAI back in 1998, when I started working at Thorbjørnrud Hotel.

Q: What do you think is the best thing about HSMIAI?

A: Networking and professional updating.

Q: Are there any activities or projects you think HSMIAI should start up?

A: The passing on of qualifications, the hosting role and meal culture. As skilled workers within experience, qualifications and sensitivity are crucial for success.

Q: Describe your perfect weekend.

A: Sailing in the summer, or strolling through the streets of a larger city, with no aim or purpose. Always nice to have the kids visiting, enjoying the company of good friends and good food.

Q: If you were Norway's Prime Minister, what would be your highest priorities?

A: 100 percent protection of cultivable soil, a non-renewable resource, emphasis and focus on status and content in craftsmanship. We can't all be economists or academics. Make the mutually dependent agriculture and hospitality a joint business area. Improve the focus on quality, and making sure my cabinet ministers don't fuss about food having to be so cheap all the time.

Q: How would someone who knows you describe you?

A: Slightly absent-minded, industrious, kind and spirited.

Q: What is your next travel destination?

A: An autumn vacation in Paris with the kids.

Q: Do you have any special hobbies?

A: My life is a great hobby, no, how should I put it? Has to be something related to food and food culture, at home and abroad.

Q: If you were trapped on a desert island, what would you take with you, if you could choose one thing?

A: A cow, providing food and good company.

Q: Thank you for your time. Do you have any personal comments?

A: I'd like to gather a group of people and make Thorbjørnrud a venue for those interested in learning and sharing knowledge and competence within the fields of food and meal culture.

***Photo:** Olav Lie Nilsen, owner and founder of the Thorbjørnrud hotel in Jevnaker, Norway. Photograph from Thorbjørnrud hotel.*

Popular afternoon tea

For a country that considers tea their unofficial national drink, it is cause for great celebration that afternoon tea is back in vogue – and in a big way, according to the Mail Online.

After years of coffee shops spring up on high streets across the country, the humble brew is fighting back.

In fact, afternoon tea has become such big business for leading hotels in the capital, that some are putting on six sittings a day to cope with demand.

Read

more:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-1373944/Afternoon-tea-popular-hotels-huge-boost-business-thanks-brew.html#ixzz1IuWUloXj>

Aubergine, Marlow Bridge

I was with my best friend, which perhaps intensified the romantic atmosphere of the Compleat Angler, as there was no pesky real-life man to spoil it. The restaurant that now houses Aubergine has been here for donkey's years, since its low-slung, vaulted, leaded interior was the height of the mode. (The panels in the cocktail lounge have been there for four centuries, apparently. The restaurant itself feels like English heritage via the 1930s. You can picture discreet affairs conducted in the dying days of the aristocracy. It's all tremendously exciting.) The set menu (£45 for two courses, £55 for three) was preceded by a frankly horrid amuse-bouche – pickled anchovies that tasted of vinegar, on top of pickled carrots that tasted alarmingly of vinegar, drizzled in a saffron oil that was no match for the vinegar. I didn't mind, to be honest. It seemed to be a new twist on the amuse concept – not a palate cleanser so much as a palate stripper. And it made us so grateful for our delicious starters.

[Read more at Telegraph.co.uk](http://Telegraph.co.uk)

Whole Foods Market, Kensington

We grew tired of building monuments to God, so in the boom we took to constructing cathedrals to food. Great vaulted expanses sprung skywards around every town, where we were invited to worship not purity, but freshness. The spiritual foundations of supermarkets were always, in truth, a little shallow. Adverts might have described a raspberry fool as

“heavenly”, but it could just as easily have used devil’s horns as decorative motifs.

The Lisbon earthquake of 1755 destroyed everything, including faith. The Cathedral of Santa Maria crumbled, crushing worshippers on a Catholic holiday. Voltaire asked how a disaster killing 100,000 innocents could be “for the best of all possible worlds”. The London economic quake of 2009 scored lower on the Richter scale, but left many citadels to capitalism in ruins. Supermarkets appeared particularly vulnerable, having elevated mere trifle to something almost worthy of worship. Just as the earthquake shattered belief, the economic tremors left many questioning the value of the food movement.

[Read more at Telegraph.co.uk](#)

Lutyens opens in Fleet St.

Terence Conran is hoping to lure journalists back to Fleet Street with the opening of his latest venture with Prescott & Partners – a French restaurant and bar called [Lutyens](#).

The 130-cover restaurant in the former Reuters building in Fleet Street has been created by the same team behind Boundary & Albion in Shoreditch and includes a large bar with charcuterie counter, crustacea and sushi bar, members club and four private dining and meeting rooms.

[Read more at Big Hospitality](#)