

FOODIES & FOOD TOURISM



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Auteursrechtelijk beschermd materiaal

This is equivalent to advocating activity or experience-based segmentation, rather than the typical demographics. It also argues for more psychographic information, such as values and attitudes.

Gourmet On Tour (<http://www.gourmetontour.com/>) is a company that offers experiences based on either a specific area or a style of travel, such as solo, private tour or group tours. The combinations seem endless, including Yorkshire Dales in England (cook with our guest celebrity chef; stay in a 17th century castle; pick fresh herbs from the kitchen garden; go for stunning country walks) to Taste of Sichuan, China (learn about Sichuanese food, one of the four great Chinese cuisines; visit adorable pandas at the world-renowned panda research centre; hike on the Happy Mountain, UNESCO site of the largest carved Buddha; join our professional food photographer for a night market photo tour).

■ Restaurants and cooking schools

Restaurants and cooking schools can play a supporting role in food tourism or become star attractions. A destination restaurant or cooking school will add great value to any food tourism cluster. But what is it?

A destination restaurant or cooking school is one that has a strong enough appeal to draw tourists. Its reputation is generally linked to a celebrity chef, or to its high standing within some regional, national or international ranking system.

- The idea of a destination restaurant supposedly originated with the *Michelin Guide*, which rated restaurants as to whether they were worth a special trip or a detour while one travelled by car in France. Now there are many guides and online sources, so ratings and rankings can be confusing. One of the world's best restaurants, Noma, in Copenhagen, has been discussed earlier in this chapter in the context of New Nordic Cuisine.

According to Bennett and Freemantle (2014: 171) "Culinary schools and classes have always been driven by media." Movies about food and destinations, celebrity chefs and cooking channels all contribute to rising demand. Using the example of a Sonoma California culinary school, called Ramekins, these authors determine that the success of such an enterprise depends on utilizing the region's many culinary experts, artisans, farms and wineries to stay booked all year round. Ramekins is also popular for weddings, reunions and corporate events. Local products are promoted and tours of the region offered.

The Italian region of Tuscany inspires pilgrimages from both wine and food lovers the world over. It's no wonder that it is home to many destination cooking schools, often hosted by celebrity chefs. Here is one example:

*"What do we offer on the cooking school Tuscany (tuscookany.com/
Cooking-School-Tuscany)"*

You will be cooking, dining, wining, relaxing, having fun and stay at a luxurious villas in Tuscany. During a week or three days' at the cooking school Tuscany you will not only learn some great new cooking techniques, you'll also make friends for life. It's the perfect way of learn cooking great food while discovering the regional culture and cuisine on our cooking school Tuscany.

- *Fun and relaxing atmosphere*
- *Professional hands-on lessons at our cooking school Tuscany in small groups*
- *Organic ingredients used in our cooking school*
- *Environmentally friendly villas in Tuscany*
- *Plenty of time to explore Tuscany*
- *Full day culinary Excursion*
- *English speaking Native chefs from Tuscany*
- *No commuting between the cooking school and accommodation"*

Destination restaurant: The Walnut Tree, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, Wales

Contributed by Dr. Liz Sharples

The Walnut Tree is an award winning, one Michelin starred restaurant and Inn situated on the edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park close to the English/Welsh border (The Walnut Tree, 2014).

This famous establishment has been in operation since the early 1960s when Franco Taruschio OBE bought the pub and transformed it into one of the best loved restaurants in the UK. The Walnut Tree struggled when Taruschio retired and sold the restaurant in 2001 but recovered when one of the UKs most 'enduringly successful' (Great British Chefs, 2014) chefs, Shaun Hill, picked up the reins in 2008.

Hill began his career in 1966 working for Robert Carrier and Brian Turner at their top London restaurants, won a Michelin star for Gidleigh Park in Devon in the 1980s but is best known for the part that he played in putting the Shropshire town of Ludlow (about 50 miles from the Walnut Tree) on the gastronomic map. His ownership of the 24-seated Michelin starred Merchant House in Ludlow between 1994 and 2005 helped to pave the way for other world class chefs who have subsequently opened excellent restaurants in the town. He continues to be a loyal supporter of the Ludlow Marches Food and Drink Festival, arguably the most successful major food event in the UK. (Ludlow Food and Drink Festival, 2014)