

# Entering the European market for food tourism products

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The European market of food tourists is very large. Food safety and local regulations are at the heart of preparing food travel products for the European market. As the world reopens to tourism following the COVID-19 pandemic, additional health and safety protocols will need to be in place to reassure European travellers. European tourists are keen users of Online Tour Operators (OTAs) when booking food experiences all over the world, and they offer local operators a convenient method of reaching this large market of travellers.

## Contents of this page

1. [What requirements must food tourism products comply with to be allowed on the European market?](#)
2. [Through what channels can you get food tourism products on the European market?](#)
3. [What competition will you face in the food tourism market?](#)
4. [What are the prices for food tourism products on the European market?](#)

## 1. What requirements must food tourism products comply with to be allowed on the European market?

European tour operators that sell food tourism products to European tourists are bound by strict regulations to ensure the safety of their travellers and to protect them financially. You should understand what these regulations are.

### What are the mandatory and additional requirements that buyers have?

The requirements that European tour operators have for food tourism products in developing countries cover the following:

- The European Package Travel Directive
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Liability Insurance and Insolvency Protection

As a first step, you should read the CBI's [What requirements must tourism services comply with to be allowed on the European market](#) and familiarise yourself with the comprehensive details of legal, non-legal and common requirements.

### Local regulations around the serving of food/drink to the public

Establishments that serve food to the public are subject to a wide range of regulations to keep their customers safe. You should familiarise yourself with the local regulations in your destination around the handling and serving of food. You may need to register your business and/or have a licence to serve food. You should check what those requirements are with the relevant authorities, such as local government departments, public health authorities and/or with the local council.

If you work with local suppliers to provide a food experience, you must be sure they conform with all the local

regulations.

Food safety and hygiene around the handling, storing, preparation and serving of food is very important for providers of food tourism products to ensure that consumers are kept safe. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 600 million people fall ill after eating contaminated food every year, and almost half a million people die from foodborne diseases, which can be bacterial, viral or chemical. The WHO has published Five Keys to Safer Food, which promote safe food handling for both consumers and food handlers such as restaurants or other food business:

1. Keep clean
2. Separate raw and cooked
3. Cook thoroughly
4. Keep food at safe temperatures
5. Use safe water and raw materials

Read the WHO's [Food Safety](#) factsheet for more detailed information about the importance of good food management.

Depending on the rules in your country, you must be very clear about the serving and consumption of alcohol, particularly if it is forbidden in your destination.

## Food safety standards

If your business serves food directly to tourists, you should consider buying and adopting the [ISO 22000 Food Safety Management Standard](#). The standard informs businesses what they need to do to manage food safety hazards to ensure that food is safe. European operators are more likely to want to do business with you if you demonstrate your understanding that food safety for their clients is an important issue.

## COVID-19: Preparing to reopen following the pandemic

In summer of 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a considerable impact on the tourism industry worldwide. The rules for travelling to and from Europe are complex and every country has imposed different regulations for outbound and inbound travellers. Most European countries identify other countries as green, amber or red list destinations, with red list countries subject to the strictest regulations, such as compulsory quarantine in government facilities and banning travel for leisure.

This includes returning residents from countries such as India, South Africa and Brazil where new virus variants pose a significant threat. Neighbouring countries tend to be under similar restrictions, such as Bangladesh, countries in southern Africa, and other South American countries.

Travel within the EU for European nationals has become easier with the introduction of the EU Digital Covid Certificate of Vaccination. UK travellers are subject to different restrictions within Europe, as the UK is no longer a member of the EU. However, every country has different rules and you should do your own research to find out what they are.

- [Re-open EU](#) is an interactive tool developed by the European Union (EU) to provide information about the current COVID-19 situation in each country. It is regularly updated and provides the latest information about the health situation, coronavirus measures and travel information.
- Keep abreast of advice given to UK nationals about travel to red, amber and green list countries on the government's [Foreign Travel Advice](#) page.
- Consult IATA's [interactive travel restrictions map](#) for travel restrictions in most other countries. You should also be aware of the restrictions placed on inbound travellers to your own country and keep checking in the event of any developments. Visit your own country's government website to find out more.

However, as national vaccination programmes around the world gather pace, the tourism industry is optimistic for recovery to some degree during the summer of 2021. Domestic tourism will be the first segment to recover. In the short term, this offers local tour operators the chance to reach out to local markets. This is likely to be followed by increased travel to short haul destinations. For Europeans, this means travel to a neighbouring country on the continent.

Long haul travel to developing countries is likely to recover more slowly and decisions to travel abroad will depend upon conditions of entry imposed on visitors and safety protocols. Research shows that demand for travel is very high in Europe, particularly among adventure travellers.

A survey in early 2021 among British and American tourists found that [70% plan to take a holiday this year](#) but that COVID-19 worries are their biggest concern. Being able to travel safely, being vaccinated, low infection rates in the countries they want to visit and the availability of COVID-valid travel insurance are likely to impact upon travel decisions.

You should use this 'down time' to prepare your travel product for a European market that is keen to travel, but will need reassurance that there are excellent safety protocols and cleanliness measures in place to keep them safe. You must also establish new booking terms and conditions and clearly state what cancellation and waivers you will offer to your buyers during the pandemic.

Consult the CBI study [How to respond to COVID-19 in the tourism sector](#) for tips on preparing for the future recovery of the tourism sector. The study includes detailed information about revising terms and conditions to help you amend yours.

Viator, the world's largest online travel agency (OTA) for trips, tours and experiences, has gathered together a number of useful resources for tour and activity operators, [COVID-19: Resources and How to Navigate your Business through a Crisis](#).

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has launched a new set of measures to rebuild consumer confidence, reduce risk and encourage travel to resume. The measures were developed with other partners including the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA). Some of the measures developed include:

- Reducing numbers of participants to allow for social distancing
- Ensuring activity difficulty levels are not above ability, to reduce the need for rescue services
- Providing clear, consistent and up-to-date communication on health and hygiene protocols
- Providing clear information in advance and on arrival of protocols such as wearing of face masks, hand hygiene guidance and social distancing requirements
- Encouraging online sales wherever possible
- Encouraging guests to handle their own equipment for the whole trip
- Limiting queuing and physical contact wherever possible

You can download WTTC's [Tour Operators - Global Protocols for the New Normal](#) for more details about the measures and decide whether to apply for the ['Safe Travels' Stamp Application](#).

Together with some major international tour operators, ATTA has also published a range of insights and frameworks to help local tour operators reopen adventure tourism niches safely, including [Culinary Experiences Amid COVID-19: Recommendations](#). Download the guide to see what you can adopt for your business.

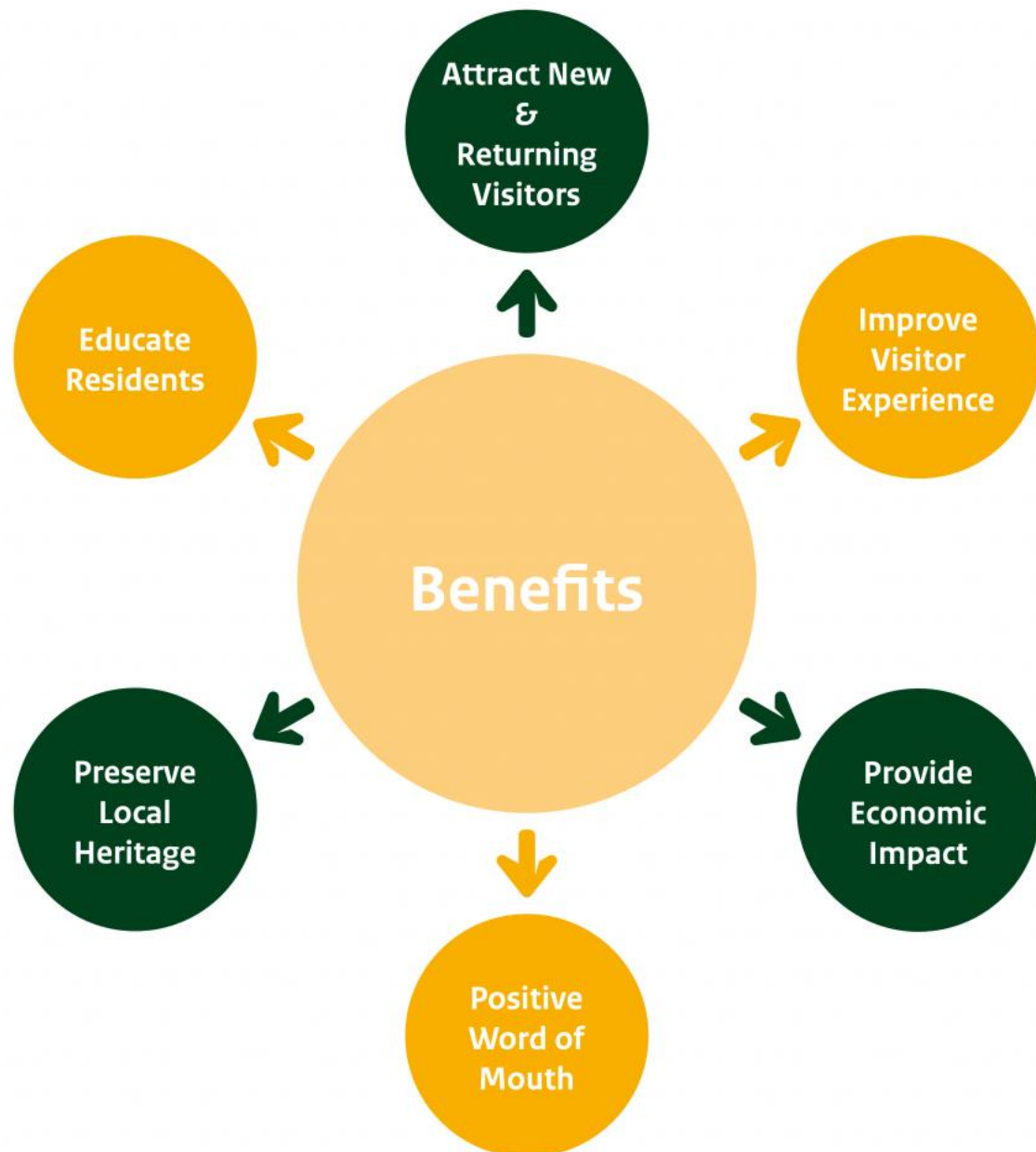
For the remainder of this report, all discussion, insight and advice has been provided on the basis of travel in normal circumstances.

## **What are the requirements for niche markets?**

## Understanding the value of food tourism to local economies and destinations' reputation

Experiencing local cuisines is often one of the main reasons that travellers choose to visit a destination, and this is a trend that is set to continue. The global food tourism market is expected to continue growing until 2027. Europe is one of the largest markets and is expected to account for 35% of the market share. The chart below demonstrates the possible benefits of a food travel product to a destination.

Figure 1: Benefits of a Food Travel Product to a Destination



Source: World Food Travel Association (WFTA)

It is well understood that local cuisines and cooking traditions offer important insight into the culture of a place. Food tourists often select a destination to visit based on the local cuisine, which includes wine, beer or other locally served beverages, like tea or coffee. Food tourists often take part in several memorable food experiences

while on holiday. A survey in 2019 found that 45% of respondents took part in at least five different culinary activities while on a single trip, and 93% had taken part in at least one authentic food experience in the previous two years.

According to UNWTO's [Global Report on Food Tourism](#), a survey among its members found that almost 9 out of 10 respondents believe that local cuisines are a significant influence on a destination's image. Additionally, UNWTO found that food tourists spend a third of their budget on food.

Figure 2: The Importance of Food Tourism



Source: Venngage/UNWTO

### Developing authentic food culture and experiences

The market for food travel products is extremely large and diverse and there are many good opportunities for local tour operators to enter the market. Food experiences offer an authentic and meaningful experience for visiting tourists. There are many examples of food tourism experiences and activities that are enjoyed by tourists all over the world. These include:

- Food festivals and events

- Food trails
- Food museums and exhibitions
- Local food markets
- Street food tour – food cooked and served on the street
- Other food tours – gourmet, vegetarian/vegan, food trucks, bakeries, pastry shops, desserts, coffee shops, tea stalls
- Visits to vineyards, wineries, breweries, distilleries
- Food/wine tasting experiences
- Sharing meals with local people/families
- Overnight homestays with local families, taking part in meal preparation
- Harvesting experiences, for example, dates, coffee/cocoa beans, tea picking, fruit picking, cheese making, pickling/bottling, meat curing
- Visiting local producers, farmers, artisanal producers
- Cooking classes and workshops – local cuisine, gourmet cuisine, cocktail mixing, chocolate making
- Culinary experiences with well-known local chefs and specialists
- Online food experiences such as cooking classes and demonstrations
- Gastronomic experiences with tasting menus

Recognising that food is an important feature of a destination's culture, UNESCO has included several notable cuisines, food produce or traditional cooking techniques within its listing of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Table 1: Food Elements on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List in Developing Countries

Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity	Country
Ancient traditional Qvevri wine making method	Georgia
Date palm, knowledge, skills, traditions and practices	Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
Dolma making and sharing tradition	Azerbaijan
Flatbread making and sharing culture	Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey
Kimjang, the making and sharing of kimchi	South Korea
Knowledge, know-how and practices pertaining to the production of couscous	Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia
Lavash, the preparation, meaning and appearance of traditional bread	Armenia

Mediterranean diet	Morocco
Nar Bayrami, traditional pomegranate festivity and culture	Azerbaijan
Nsima, culinary tradition	Malawi
Oshi Palav, a traditional meal and its social and cultural contexts	Tajikistan
Oshituthi shomagongo, marula fruit festival	Namibia
Palov culture and tradition	Uzbekistan
Practices and traditional knowledge of Terere in the culture of Pohã Ñana, Guaraní ancestral drink	Paraguay
Tradition for kimchi making	North Korea
Traditional cuisine	Mexico
Turkish coffee culture and tradition	Turkey

Source: UNESCO Intangible Cultural World Heritage

If your business is located within a UNESCO-recognised region, you are well positioned to be able to develop a travel product that takes advantage of the region's cultural reputation around food.

Therefore, in most destinations, food travel products are very common, however owing to the huge range of possible experiences, it is relatively easy to make your food travel product stand out.

When you are preparing a food travel product for the European market, there are several factors to consider:

1. Decide which niche you want to work in, such as offering guided tours, home hosting, cooking classes, or tasting experiences.
2. Make sure you know what the competition is. You should find out about the other food travel products that exist in your area and where there is an opportunity for you to develop something different.
3. Consider your local cuisine and whether elements of it will appeal to the European palate. If the local speciality is very spicy, you might want to include less spicy alternatives as well.
4. Likewise, be very clear to specify if your experience is or is not suitable for vegetarians or vegans. The vegetarian/vegan movement is very strong in Europe and there are believed to be around [75 million vegetarians/vegans on the continent](#), a figure that is growing all the time. Many Europeans are choosing to eat less meat in response to an increased awareness of health, environmental and ethical issues that surround the consumption of meat.
5. In addition, it's important that you find out in advance whether there are any dietary needs among the group, particularly if there are any allergies that you need to be aware of.
6. Where possible, emphasise the use of local and seasonal produce and/or organic produce. These factors are the hallmarks of sustainability in food production and are increasingly important considerations for European tourists who are keen to minimise their impact while travelling.



7. Develop strong relationships with the people who run the businesses and local providers you want to work with, including the owners, the chefs and the waiters/staff, as they can help you enhance your experience, which in turn will bring them additional business and boost their reputation.
8. Ensure that all local providers that you work with adhere to strict hygiene protocols to keep your visitors safe.
9. Tour guides should be well-trained, personable, speak the language of the visitor well and have an evident love of food. Being able to bring the food to life through historical and cultural information will enhance the authenticity of the experience to the traveller.
10. It is important to plan the itinerary well, whether it lasts for two hours, four hours or more. A mix of different tastes, cuisines, flavours and so on will create diversity and interest.
11. If the tour lasts more than a few hours, be sure to allow for a bathroom break, particularly if beverages are involved.
12. Ensure you consider all the required travelling time to/from and between stops, and be clear whether the tour is by foot, bicycle, car or other, and level of exertion required.
13. If your experience is a tour of several food/drink stations, make sure that there is not too much food/drink at each one so visitors are not overwhelmed. Ideally, small bites to give a different flavour/taste at each station will be enough.
14. Consider how you might add value to a food experience by combining it with other activities. For instance, a cultural sightseeing trip to an attraction could finish with a tour of a local food market and a picnic in a pleasant location.

## Food Tourism Guide Certification

The World Food Travel Association (WFTA) offers [professional food travel certifications](#) for tour operators and tour guides. The courses are delivered online and topics covered include how to design culinary tours that sell, do's and don't's for guides, and how to meet customer expectations. Once certified, guides and operators are listed as certified on the World Food Travel Market B2B marketplace. You can also include certification details on your own website. You should consider whether being certified would be beneficial for your business.

### Tips:

For some helpful tips to create a successful food travel product, read this blog, [5 Ways this Operator Makes Her Food Tour Rock](#).

Consult [Food Tour Pros](#), which hosts workshops to support food travel businesses all over the world.

To improve your skills as a tour guide, consider taking some online training. There are many options to choose from, such as this one: [Be a Better Guide](#). The site also features a range of [free training videos](#) for existing tour guides.

For more advice on developing a travel product, consult the CBI guide on [How to get started developing your tourism product](#).

## 2. Through what channels can you get food tourism products on the European market?

### How is the end-market segmented?

The market for food tourists from Europe is very large. Pre-pandemic, a significant increase in the interest for and availability of food-related experiences, events and activities was reported by the WFTA in the [2020 Food Travel Monitor](#) (available for sale). This growth has been driven by the younger generations, namely the Millennial consumer group (born between 1980 and 1995, aged between 26 and 41 today) and Gen Z (born



from 1996, aged 25 or younger today).

The Millennials are particularly important – 77% state they like to take trips to enjoy memorable eating and drinking experiences. Although young, the Gen Z group are also strongly motivated by exploring local food and drink while travelling. WFTA classifies this group as ‘Super Foodies’ on account of their high interest in food, its history and heritage.

From a broad perspective, food tourists can be segmented by motivation to take part in food tourism activities.

Table 2: Motivation of Food Tourists by Behaviour

Segmentation 1: Motivations of the Culinary Tourist based on Behaviour
<p><i>Deliberate Culinary Tourist</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Account for 50% of food tourists, spend 50% of travel budget on food experiences</li><li>• Motivated to experience and learn about food as the primary reason for a trip</li><li>• Well-educated, wealthy</li><li>• High interest in culture, travel, social and environmental issues</li><li>• Keen on authentic experiences, immersive experiences with local people/communities</li><li>• Care about provenance, quality and sustainability of food</li></ul>
<p><i>Opportunistic Culinary Tourist</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Account for around 25% of food tourists</li><li>• Like to seek out gastronomic experiences, but their primary motive for travel is something else, such as culture or adventure</li><li>• Enjoy accessible food activities such as visiting local markets, and food trips combined with other activities</li></ul>
<p><i>Accidental Culinary Tourist</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Account for around 25% of food tourists</li><li>• Will take part in food tourism experiences if they are encouraged to; unlikely to seek out food experiences</li></ul>

Source: University of Massachusetts/CBI/Mintel

To support the wide range of motivations and consumer behaviour that surrounds food and travel, the WFTA has created a series of 13 PsychoCulinary Profiles to rationalise how people make different decisions and most people exhibit up to three of the 13 profiles:

- Adventurer
- Ambience
- Authentic
- Budget
- Eclectic
- Gourmet
- Innovative

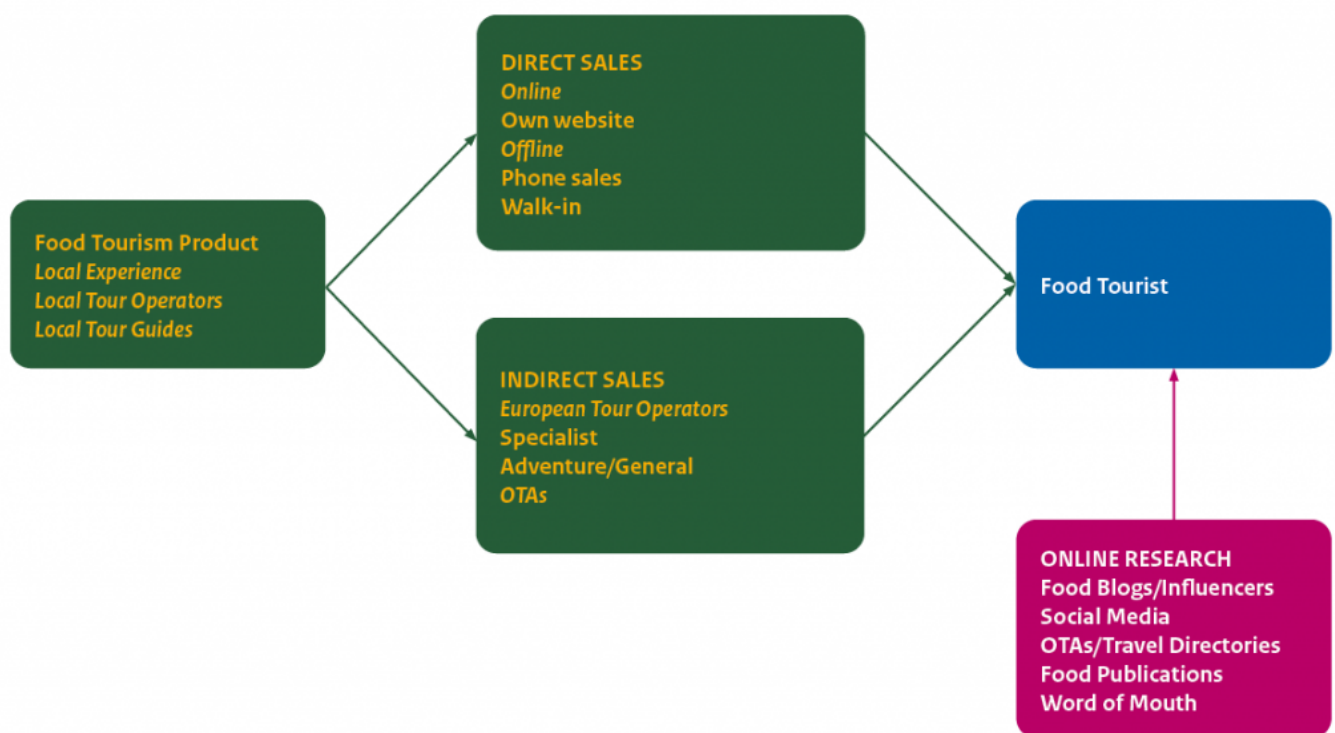
- Localists
- Novice
- Organic
- Social
- Trendy
- Vegetarian

The profiles were created to help target food travel products more effectively. For instance, a food tourist with profiles that are Adventurer, Localist and Budget is more likely to choose a destination that has similar food experiences. The same person would be unlikely to favour a destination with a Gourmet, Trendy and Innovative food experiences.

## Through what channels do food tourism products end up on the end-market?

Sales channels for food travel products are a combination of direct sales and indirect sales. Direct sales are sales made directly to customers through your own website, by phone, or walk-in sales if you have a retail shop front. Indirect sales refer to sales made to customers indirectly via a tour operator or other type of travel sales agent.

Figure 3: Sales Channels for Local Operators Selling Food Travel Products



Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

- Direct Sales – If you have your own website that can process online bookings or requests, Fully Independent Travellers (FITs) can make direct bookings with you.
- Specialist Operators – Operators that specialise in food/wine trips are limited. [Gourmet on Tour](#) offers hands on cooking course, private wine tours and culinary adventures to a small number of destinations including Morocco, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. [Trip Feast](#) also offers food tours to a select number of popular foodie destinations.

- General and Adventure Operators - Many large European tour operators offer food tours as well as food experiences within a broader itinerary that includes adventure and/or culture experiences. Examples include [Intrepid Travel](#), [Original Travel](#), [Imaginative Traveller](#), [Essential Escapes](#) and [Destinology](#). These UK-based tour operators also sell their products to European and North American clients. French adventure tour operator [Terre Voyages](#) has a gastronomic section of trips to a variety of destinations. German operator [Genussreisen](#) specialises in culinary holidays in Europe.
- Online Travel Agents (OTAs) - OTAs selling trips and travel experiences have become one of the fastest growing platforms for sales. Food experiences are among the most popular and best rated experiences on platforms like Tripadvisor. In 2018, the OTA reported that [food tours and cooking classes both featured in the top five categories, growing by 57%](#). Many OTAs include food, wine, cooking and culinary activities as a category of experience. The chart below outlines specialist OTAs that offer food experiences.

Table 3: OTAs Offering Food Travel Experiences

OTA	Useful information
<a href="#">Traveling Spoon</a>	Traveling Spoon specialises in providing home hosting culinary experiences all over the world, connecting travellers with local people. During the pandemic, many cooking classes have been conducted online.
<a href="#">Airbnb Cooking Experiences</a>	In 2019, Airbnb Experiences created a new category of bookable experiences. Read its helpful guide about <a href="#">Experiences involving food</a> , which offers good information for hosts wanting to set up their own cooking experience.
<a href="#">Eatwith</a>	Eatwith is a large community for authentic culinary experiences with local people, available in more than 130 countries. To date, 25,000 hosts have catered for 265,000 guests. The website features 5,000 culinary experiences.
<a href="#">Secret Food Tours</a>	Secret Food Tours offers luxury culinary activities in a small number of destinations, including Bangkok in Thailand and Hanoi in Vietnam.
<a href="#">Viator and Tripadvisor</a>	Cooking classes, dining experiences and other food/drink experiences are common across both Viator and Tripadvisor, the largest OTAs selling trips, tours and experiences today. Tripadvisor owns Viator so experiences on one also feature on the other.

Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

Other notable OTAs on the marketplace include [Evaneos](#), [Resirest](#), [GetYourGuide](#), [TourRadar](#), [Musement](#) and [Klook](#).

### Tips:

Research the experiences offered through each of the different sales channels. This will give you a good idea of the sort of experiences that are popular with the European food tourist.

For more information about FITs, download the CBI study, [What are the opportunities in the European FIT tourism market?](#)

## What is the most interesting channel for you?

Each sales channel is worth considering for your business depending upon what travel product you offer.

European tourists use the Internet extensively to research and book travel products, so it is becoming more important for you to have your own business website, whether or not you are able to sell directly from it. In addition, it offers another way for European tour operators to find your travel products to sell directly to their clients.

OTAs are fast-moving, dynamic sales platforms and a major way that tourists book experiences. It is important that you understand what is involved working with an OTA. There are benefits and disadvantages to working with OTAs, as you can see in the table below.

Table 4: Pros and Cons of Working with OTAs

Advantages	Disadvantages
Low-cost way of listing your experience/tour	Commission charged on sales can be high, usually around 20%
OTAs take on all the marketing and website costs, including design and managing sales	Terms and conditions may be restrictive for cancellations and/or re-bookings
OTAs have an extensive reach to customers you may not otherwise have	You will need to be organised to manage sales made via OTA and direct sales
OTAs are popular with travellers who like to compare trips to differentiate between service and costs	
Online reviews are a good way to attract new/repeat customers	

Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

To help you get started with an OTA, travel software company Trekkssoft has produced a number of useful guides, including [How to Work with OTAs – A Guide for Tour and Activity Companies](#). You will need to sign up

online – it is free to do.

Check out how to join each of the specialist OTAs using the following links:

- [Traveling Spoon – Become a Host](#)
- [Host an experience on Airbnb](#)
- [Become a Host on Eatwith](#)
- [Secret Food Tours – Join Us](#)
- [Viator/Tripadvisor – Become a Supplier](#)

### **Tips:**

For more information on building or improving your website, see the CBI study, [How to be a successful tourism company online](#).

To work effectively with European tour operators, consult the CBI studies [10 tips for finding buyers on the European tourism market](#), and [10 tips for doing business with European tourism buyers](#).

Sign up to Arival Travel for free and download the [Arival Guide: Airbnb Experiences \(2021 Edition\)](#), compiled to help operators decide whether they should list their trips on the platform.

## **3. What competition will you face in the food tourism market?**

### **Which countries are you competing with?**

#### **Argentina**

Argentina is well-known for its food and wine. Featuring Spanish, Italian and French influences, Argentinian cuisine has a Mediterranean flavour. Steak and meat dishes are often prepared as *asado* (barbequed mix of meats) and cooked on *parrillas*, traditional Argentinian barbeques. *Empanadas* (stuffed bread) are another popular Argentinian speciality.

As one of the world's leading wine producers, there are around 2,000 wineries in Argentina and many well-known wine-producing regions such as Mendoza, which is home to the Malbec grape. Following the implementation of the Mendoza Wine Trails project from 2008, visitor numbers to wineries had increased to 1.5 million by 2015, of which more than 70% visited vineyards in the Mendoza region. Argentina's Wine Roads comprise a wine circuit that extends into several provinces and there are many tours that combine both culinary and wine experiences.

In 2016, the National Institute of Tourism Promotion (INPROTUR) launched Cocin.ar, a two-year development programme to promote culinary tourism, mapping Argentina's regional food specialities as a way to promote the exploration of food as the driving force behind travel. The final phase of the programme involved including gastronomic tourism within the National Development Plan 2017-2027 as a key tourism segment.

#### **India**

Indian food is one of the world's most popular cuisines - the word curry derives from the Tamil word *kari* (spicy sauce), and Indian restaurants are extremely common in many European countries.

Food tourism in India is a growing trend. There are many food experiences on offer throughout the country that include exploring fresh food markets, attending food festivals, trying local ingredients, travelling with a chef and



cooking classes. The trend has shifted from gourmet dining to local tasting through homestays and street food sold at *dhabas* (stalls). Foodie hotspots are Delhi, Hyderabad, Rajasthan, Mumbai, Kerala and Kolkata. The food tourism industry is estimated to be worth US\$2 billion annually.

Promoting food and culinary tourism in India is the [India Food Tourism Organisation \(IFTO\)](#), a non-profit membership organisation made up of travel agents, tour operators, chefs and restaurants. The organisation helps to raise India's culinary profile in India and abroad, supports street vendors and rural farmers, and helps to preserve and promote traditional food skills and culture.

There are many food festivals, including the Grub Fest in March/April (Mumbai, Bangalore, Kokata, New Delhi); the Great Indian Food Festival in January (New Delhi); and the Goa Food and Cultural Festival in April (Goa), all of which reflect the diverse cultures and traditions of the regions.

Street food in India is attracting increasing numbers of tourists who are keen to experience the local flavour of a destination and are playing a crucial role in the tourism sector. However, food poisoning, or 'Delhi belly', is often cited as a worry by travellers. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has implemented a number of projects to ensure food safety including Project Clean Street Food to train 20,000 roadside vendors in Delhi on health and hygiene.

## Mexico

Figure 4: Regional Cuisine of Mexico



Source: Imgur

Developing and investing in food tourism to encourage tourists to experience more of Mexico and its diversity of

cultures was identified as key to improving Mexico's image. Oaxaca, Puebla and Mexico City are hotspots for Mexican Cuisine and dishes of note include *chapulines* (fried grasshoppers) and *tlayudas* (giant tortillas).

The Routes of Mexico were designed by the Mexico Tourism Board to encourage visitors to visit areas of the country in more depth. The Wine Country and Aquarium of the World includes the wine and cuisine of the Baja Peninsula, famous for its seafood. A Thousand Flavours of Mole travels through the states of Tlaxcala, Puebla and Oaxaca that traditionally serve various dishes featuring *mole*, a spicy sauce of which there are believed to be more than 300 varieties.

## Morocco

Morocco has a rich, diverse culture and a wealth of natural and heritage attractions including a strong, authentic food tourism offer. The cuisine is rich and inviting and spices are a key feature including coriander, cumin and saffron. Food and wine tourism is very highly regarded for its sustainability and Visit Morocco includes [Gastronomy](#) as a feature of the nation's cultural offer.

The centre of Moroccan cuisine is Marrakech, famous for its *souks* (markets), and has many local establishments and artisan producers of local specialities including the traditional slow-cooked casseroles served in traditional tagines, iconic clay cooking pots with a conical lid, and couscous. Originating in Fez, the *B'stilla* is a sweet pigeon meat filo pastry pie, while the heavily sweetened mint tea, often referred to as 'Moroccan whisky', is the drink of choice.

## Peru

Peru has emerged as one of the world's greatest food tourism destinations and attracts increasing numbers of food tourists keen to sample the varied cuisine. Peruvian cuisine is source of national pride, and is a unique blend of influences including indigenous Andean, Amazonian, Spanish and African, as well as French, Italian, Chinese and Japanese inspiration. Dishes range from Peruvian-Japanese fusion to *pachamanca*, a classic dish of slow-cooked meats and vegetables cooked over hot stones to the national dish of *ceviche*, marinated raw fish cured in citrus juices, a dish that dates back 2,000 years.

Peruvian cuisine is an important feature of Peruvian culture – according to one national poll, 39% of citizens believe gastronomy culture is the principal source of pride over the ruins of Machu Picchu (35%).

Over the past few years, numerous food tours, cookery classes and restaurants have emerged throughout the country. Many top chefs say a high number of their guests come from overseas, some specifically coming to Lima to experience the cuisine. The value of Peruvian cuisine to tourism incomes is also important as the average tourist to Peru spends between \$50 and \$100 per day on food.

## Vietnam

Vietnam has a very diverse food offering and dishes vary between the North and the South, and many traditional recipes date back hundreds of years. Famous dishes include *Pho* (noodle with beef and chicken), *Bun Cha* (rice noodle and griddled pork) and *Nem* (spring roll). Food stalls and street food are common in Vietnam and food tours are very popular. The southern region is dominated by the Mekong River and the highly fertile delta region cultivates numerous fruits and vegetables. Trips and visits to floating markets are common tourism experiences.

Vietnam's food tourism industry is rapidly attracting international attention. Its cuisine is regarded as one of the healthiest and its efforts to develop the sector were rewarded when it was awarded Asia's Leading Culinary Destination in the 2019 World Travel Awards. Recently, Vietnamese cuisine was identified by visitors to be one of the main goals of a trip to the country. The provision of culinary tourism is expanding to local tour guides, families and communities who are looking to provide authentic food experiences to interested visitors.



Vietnam Tourism has dedicated sections on its website to Food Tourism, with details of typical dishes and destinations. It has also produced a number of interesting food infographics, like the ones below.

Figure 5: Vietnam - Food Tourism Infographics

# Noodles OF VIETNAM

Slurp your way through Vietnam with these outstanding noodle dishes!



## BÚN CHẢ

Barbecued meat paddies served with fish sauce, shredded papaya, soft noodles and fresh greens.



## PHỞ

There's nothing like a hit of steaming phở broth to get you started in the morning.



## BÚN THANG

A Hanoian family favourite, this delicate noodle soup showcases thin strips of egg and ham.



## CAO LẦU

Found only in Hoi An, cao lau combines lemongrass pork broth and crispy crackers.



## BÚN BÒ HUẾ

The "greatest soup in the world" according to Anthony Bourdain is a must-try in Hue.



## BÚN THỊT NƯỚNG

Pork skewers, peanuts, and chopped chives are the stars of this Southern specialty.



## MÌ QUẢNG

Peanut-y broth, thick noodles, and tiny quail eggs -- this is a dish made in noodle heaven.





### Tip:

Visit the tourist board websites of destinations you think are your biggest competitors and check if they have a designated food/culinary/gastronomy section, to see what you can learn from them. For example, the extensive pages on Wine and Food at [Visit Chile](#) or [South Africa Travel](#), which has recently launched a new Brew Route.

## Which companies are you competing with?

Europe has been hit very hard by COVID-19 and is one of the worst affected regions in the world. As well as strict regulations around food safety, you must work hard to reassure European travellers that you have robust cleanliness protocols in place to keep them safe from harmful viruses. It is essential that you are very clear about the measures you have introduced and specify what they are on the homepage of your website or provide a prominent link to a special COVID page.

You can see how European tour operators feature detailed and clear information about how they will keep their customers safe. In many cases, it is the first thing that visitors see when they click through to the homepage. For example, [Essential Escapes](#) has a prominent Coronavirus (COVID-19) update on its homepage, and [Viator](#) also features a link on its homepage.

## Argentina

[Parrilla Tours](#) offers a range of scheduled tours and private tours of authentic restaurants in different areas of Buenos Aires. For instance, their Parrilla Tour includes a walking tour of 3 different authentic local restaurants, tasting traditional food and wine at each one and finishing at an artisanal ice cream shop. The website features numerous tempting images of food and several videos. The operator has included a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions (FAQs), which helps to build customer confidence.

The website is available to view in English, Spanish and Portuguese and tours are also operated by fluent English speakers. A pop-up promotion on the homepage is offering 20% discount off all tours. Links to international press coverage are also included.

[Sherpa Food Tours](#) offers dinner, lunch and wine tasting experiences in Buenos Aires. The website is attractive and well-designed with good use of images, which is appealing for the customer. The operator has its own website and also sells its tours on Viator. It clearly states what is included in a simple infographic:

Figure 6: Sherpa Food Tours – What's Included

# WHAT'S INCLUDED

Walk through new neighbourhoods and experience new flavors and surprises.



## World's Best Guides

Our guides know everything there is know about Buenos Aires!



## Amazing dining experience

All food and drinks are included in our tasty tour!



## Learn and enjoy!

3 hours of stories and anecdotes of Buenos Aires



## Share!

Create great friendships and memories by sharing the table with like minded traveleres.



## Discover new neighborhoods!

We ll show around local spots that are outside the mainstream areas!



## Safety First

We are fully committed to your safety during the tour!

Source: Sherpa Food Tours

At the bottom of the homepage, the operator has included a simple About Us statement that emphasises how a unique food experience in a good location with local people is the best way to experience the culture of a place. You could consider including something similar, as it's an effective way of demonstrating your understanding of the customers' needs.

## India

[No Footprints](#) is based in Mumbai and has a developed a range of experiences, workshops and tours in the city, and is looking to expand its tours in Delhi. It prominently features its Tripadvisor ranking (#1) on the homepage along with its winner award in the 2020 Indian Responsible Tourism Awards. Its tours have been featured in many international publications and it includes all the bestsellers on the homepage. Each tour is fully described and there is an accompanying video. The operator also serves cruise ship passengers on shore excursions.

Although it does not have a specific COVID-19 page, it does clearly state its policies for refunds and cancellations.

[Delhi Food Walks](#) has been 'winning the hearts of people and experts for years' and caters for individuals, groups and students. The operator offers several walks by day and night, and immersive experiences such as 'Mum's Kitchen - Cook and Eat with a Local Family'. It features many international testimonials on its homepage. It has a dedicated COVID-19 page and uses an infographic to state exactly what is included in every tour such as hand sanitiser.

Figure 7: What We Provide...

Because we care for our foodie friends ...



Constant supply of **bottled water** to keep you hydrated



**Hand sanitizer.** Hygiene first.



**No outsourcing.** All food walks designed by the foodie-in-chief, Anubhav Sapra



Leftover **food donated** to the homeless and destitute people on the streets.



We just love talking about Delhi, its **food culture**, the variety of Indian Cuisines etc.



On demand **kitchen visit** and cooking classes to help you understand the Indian Cuisine in greater detail.

Source: Delhi Food Walks

The website has sections for both Blogs and Vlogs and has been featured in many international publications including several from Europe. The operator manages its own YouTube channel with a direct link on the homepage and plans to expand its food travel products as India Culinary Tours in due course.

## Mexico

[El Taco club](#) runs a series of tours around the best places in Mexico City to experience the famous tacos. Tours include travel by bike, a trip to enjoy tacos and beer while watching Lucha Libre (Mexican wrestling), and a combination Frida Kahlo art and food experience. It also promotes its tours through Airbnb and its bike tour was one of Airbnb's 10 most booked experiences worldwide. The website makes good use of inspirational and attractive images to appeal to potential customers.

[Eat Like a Local](#) offers food safaris in Mexico City focused on street tours that are grouped around immersive experiences, budget-friendly experiences and special tours such as with children or for vegans. It is a women-only tour operator that works under responsible principles, paying a fair wage and with flexible working times and programmes. The local providers they work with are also paid fairly, and they have created their own social programmes to support local communities and homeless people.

A link to its COVID-19 policies is clearly placed on a banner on the homepage.

## Morocco

[Marrakech Food Tours](#) sells tours and street food experiences in Marrakech, including a night food tour and a summer street tour. Tours are conducted in English and include storytelling and history to bring the destination to life. The operator offers gift cards and certificates and the website features a number of recommendations of places to eat. The cancellations and no-show policy is clearly stated, and as a result of COVID-19, information about the strict health precautions in place according to Moroccan law.

[Fes Food Tours](#) invites customers to see the 'real Fez' and operates three tours that involve tasting, experiencing the culture and learning about Morocco's unique style of life. The website is simple and clear and

appealing to a European audience. Bookings can be made online and each tour is fully described and accompanied by good images and a Google map.

## Peru

As one of the leading foodie destinations in the world, there are many local tour operators conducting tours in Lima. [Lima Gourmet Company](#) offers small group and private tours including tastings and hands-on activities such as cooking classes or making a Peruvian speciality drink, the Pisco Sour. In addition, Lima Gourmet hosts virtual cooking experiences that are immersive or demos. Each tour is well described and there are many attractive images used alongside the descriptions.

The blog sections offer plenty of additional information about visiting Peru, Peruvian recipes and restaurant recommendations. The operator also hosts experiences for groups, events and conferences.

[Curious Monkey Food Tours](#) operates food tours in Cusco and Arequipa. Tour examples include Earth to Table in the Sacred Valley, which involves a meal with a local family, and the Market and Streets Tour in Cusco to sample tastings of *tamales* (steamed filled buns) and *cherimoya* (custard apple fruit). The website features lots of images of customers enjoying their food tours. It has a COVID-19 banner on its homepage.

## Vietnam

[Taste of Hoi An](#) operates one food tour, which is conducted in two parts – a walking tour of markets and streets and meeting a range of producers, followed by a private tasting. Guests learn the different names of the foods including pronunciation, and how and when they should be eaten. Learning about Vietnamese culture also plays a big part in the tour. The small operator won the [Global FoodTrekking Award in 2019](#) presented by the WFTA for Best Food Travel Storytelling and has generated more than 1,300 reviews on Tripadvisor since 2011.

[XO Tours](#) offers food tours by scooter/motorbike and all tours are conducted by women. Several tours are conducted in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) and Hoi An. The most popular tour is the OX Foodie tour in HCMC, which visits the most popular street stalls and hidden alleyways, focusing on street food dishes that are not commonly available outside Vietnam. Conducted at night, the tour visits parts of the city not typically visited by tourists.

Visitors can pay extra to have their ride filmed and tours include insurance, helmets, bike fuel, an English-speaking guide and a rain poncho if needed. There are many five-star Google reviews and in 2017, the operator was voted one of [the Top 9 Food Tours in the World](#) by Forbes.

## Which products are you competing with?

The main competing products for food travel experiences include cultural travel products and community-based tourism (CBT) travel products. Both types may or may not include a food element. To find out more about each of these niche markets, consult the relevant CBI studies on [What are the opportunities for community-based tourism from Europe](#) and [What are the opportunities for cultural tourism from Europe](#).

## 4. What are the prices for food tourism products on the European market?

Prices for food travel experiences vary considerably. Depending on whether the experience is a tasting or hands-on experience, costs will typically include a range of items including ingredients, guide, refreshments, transportation and fees. The table below offers some examples of the price differences between product type and destination. Prices exclude international airfares.

Table 5: Example Prices for Food Travel Products in Competing Destinations



Tour	Country	Duration	Price from pp (€)
<i>Day/Half Day Experiences</i>			
Private Ceviche & Pisco Sour Class (virtual cooking class or demo)	Peru	45 minutes	21
Peruvian Tapas Class (virtual cooking class or demo)	Peru	1 hour	41
Food Trail in Pondicherry	India	2.5 hours	51
Palermo Restaurant Tour, Buenos Aires	Argentina	2.5 hours	62
The Argentine Experience: Empanadas Making, Steak, Wine, Alfajores and Mate	Argentina	2.5 hours	89
Bike to Taste the World's Best Tacos	Mexico	3 hours	44
Street Food at Night - Offbeat Crash Course	Mexico	3 hours	96
Night Food Tour	Morocco	3.5 hours	58
Food and Art Al Fresco in Lima	Peru	3.5 hours	79
Dinner with the Nguyens, Hoi An	Vietnam	3.5 hours	40
Fez Food Experience	Morocco	3-4 hours	55
Old Delhi Breakfast Food Walk	India	4 hours	45
The Original Taste of Hoi An	Vietnam	4.5 hours	58
The XO Foodie, Ho Chi Minh City	Vietnam	4.5 hours	65
Mexican Food 101 - Markets and Street Food	Mexico	4.5 hours	92
Daytime Experience in Lima	Peru	5 hours	112
A Day in Delhi - Food and Culture	India	7 hours	74
<i>Food Holidays</i>			

Bite Size Hanoi and Halong Bay	Vietnam	4 days	1,233
Spices, Rice Barges and Tea Plantations	India	8 days	2,149
Mexico Real Food Adventure	Mexico	9 days	1,332
Peru Real Food Adventure	Peru	10 days	1,372
Taste of Morocco	Morocco	11 days	2,899
Cooking Holiday in Buenos Aires	Argentina	14 days	1,071

Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

### Tip:

For help to set your prices, download the CBI study, [10 tips for doing business with European tourism buyers](#) and scroll to tip 7.

This study was carried out on behalf of CBI by [Acorn Tourism Consulting Limited](#).

Please review our [market information disclaimer](#).