

A Sense of Ireland - Beyond Local Case Study

Impacts for suppliers, destinations
and nations of taking business
beyond local - Irish and Scottish
comparators



Who we are

Sheila Gilmore, Visit Arran

Jan Hay, Farming Futures, Ayrshire

Sandra Reid, Fare Consulting

Jordan Russell, Aldomak, Glasgow

Christie Slater, Loch Leven Brewery

Craig Stevenson, Braehead Foods,
Kilmarnock

Clare Winskill, Coruisk House, Isle of
Skye



Beyond Local – but what is local?

Local means different things to different people

It could be the immediate vicinity of a business, local town or region

In food terms, local can also be defined as the country of origin – for the purposes of this case study, Scotland and Ireland



Our approach to the Beyond Local question

- Our case study group included a mix of producers, suppliers and tourism businesses, so we looked at 3 concepts of beyond local:
- Beyond local for a **supplier**, specifically relevant for Christie's business at Loch Leven Brewery and Jordan's at Aldomak
- Beyond local for a **location**, specifically looking at the islands of Arran and Skye
- Beyond local for a **nation**, looking at Ireland and Scotland and how the promotion of provenance can drive success for each of these

Our methodology

Our findings are drawn from:

- Discussions with and questions to our hosts in Dublin South and Donegal
- Finding comparators for our own businesses and making reference to these
- Observations from site visits and travelling around Ireland
- Web research
- Photographs from the visits and links to wider research are used to illustrate points

Beyond Local –
the Supplier –
Loch Leven
Brewery



Loch Leven's Beyond Local Challenge

- How to take the product to a wider market without impacting on margin?
- Can be by taking the product out or bringing the customer in
- Local base working well
- Accessing customers via trade shows and a range of networks
- Kinship at heart of product marketing



What Loch Leven learned from Irish businesses – the Happy Pear



The Happy Pear

- South Dublin business now in 3 locations including Clondalkin Tower Visitor Centre
- YouTube channel with 265,000 followers
<https://www.youtube.com/user/happypeargreystones>
- Waitrose deal for 6 products
- 'Superstar chef' association with Jamie Oliver
- Recipe books and other retail (keep cups, shopping bags etc.)

Happy Pear Success Factors

- Personality of business owners – confident and engaging 'front men'
- Product is 'now', on trend with popularity of plant based eating
- Instagrammable
- Social media leverage
- Visitor centre association allows sharing of risk while expanding business
- Quality of product

What Loch Leven learned at Sliabh Liag Distillery

Success Factors

Use industry connections

Tell the 'story' – it was far from gin you were reared (a frequently used Irish put down!)

Unique flavours connecting with land and sea

Distribution as opposed to wholesale route; 50% of business in export



Beyond Local – the Supplier Challenge – Aldomak, Glasgow

- A Glasgow based family business, established in 1932, manufacturing Scottish confectionery
<https://aldomak.co.uk>
- Already going beyond local-exporting fudge tins to USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia
- Supplier to Aldi in Scotland supplying Scottish Tablet, Fudge and Macaroon
- Aldi run annual national promotion across UK and Ireland



What Aldomak learned from Irish businesses – Partas and the Food Hub, Drumshanbo

- Go beyond local by supporting locals
- Emphasis on neighbourhood economics - place, relationships, money, economy
- Wide variety of food producers in incubator units
- Strong community engagement; enhanced local employment
- Shifted perception of local areas but 'losing the poor mouth'
- Businesses will relocate to get the right space
- Gin and boxty international exports



Aldomak plans:

- To improve engagement in local community with customers, other businesses, community groups and charities
- Let people know about the products being made on their 'door steps'
- Engaging with the local community will create a sense of pride for the area and give Aldomak a good support base for any events in the area.
- Development of healthier snack bars to market to schools and other groups
- Introduce a work experience or apprentice scheme with local schools
- Aldomak would be able to give them training in a low risk environment, introducing them to a variety of skills and experience in the business

Taste of Arran and Drumshanbo – 2 great schemes, both dependent on funding support and community engagement

- **Taste of Arran**
- Arran is known as Scotland's foodie island and has a food scene **beyond local**
- Island based collaboration of producers
- Whisky, beer, ice cream, cheese, oatcakes, preserves
- Plans approved in 2008 to bring manufacturers together under one roof for production, distribution, storage etc.
- But...funding was withdrawn due to global financial crisis
- Worth a revisit?



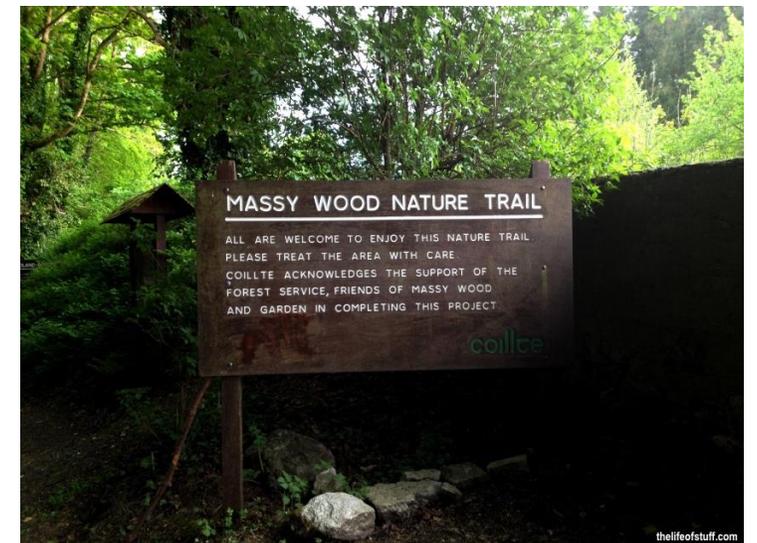
- **Drumshanbo**
- Food hub established in 2004
- Community sustainability fragile due to factory closure
- Community group took on 99 year lease
- Now has 14 producers providing 82 jobs locally
- Multi-business artisan food production centre inc. brewery, distillery
- Going **beyond local** to national recognition
- Timing of funding was key to success

thefoodhub
The centre for growth and excellence

Taking a location beyond local – South Dublin

South Dublin tourism projects aiming to drive tourists beyond Dublin centre with variety of projects

- Clondalkin Round Tower (€3.5m)
- Hellfire and Massey Estate – plans for interpretation centre
- Castle Stables – retail development opportunity
- All projects supported by local authority funding (€6m annual budget)



Taking a location beyond local – Donegal Food Coast and the Wild Atlantic Way

Donegal was considered a peripheral region in Ireland as well as Europe

Food Coast Strategy developed in 2012 with the vision...

By working collectively, to make Donegal famous for food and recognised as a pioneering region for its approach to fostering and growing new start-up and existing food businesses

Donegal Food Coast now offers a range of experiences across the Donegal stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way

<https://donegalfoodcoast.ie/>

<https://www.thewildatlanticway.com/>

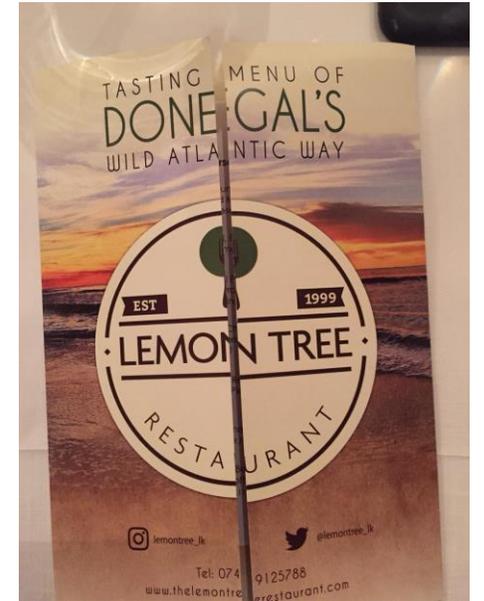
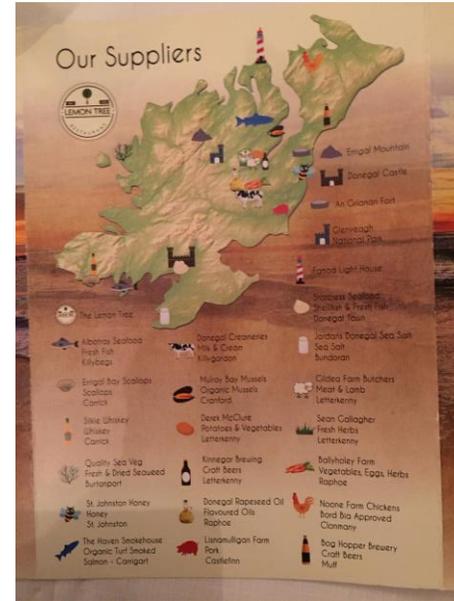


Donegal's Good Food Initiative



Donegal Food Coast Experiences





Menus – Tasting the Wild Atlantic Way

Local product

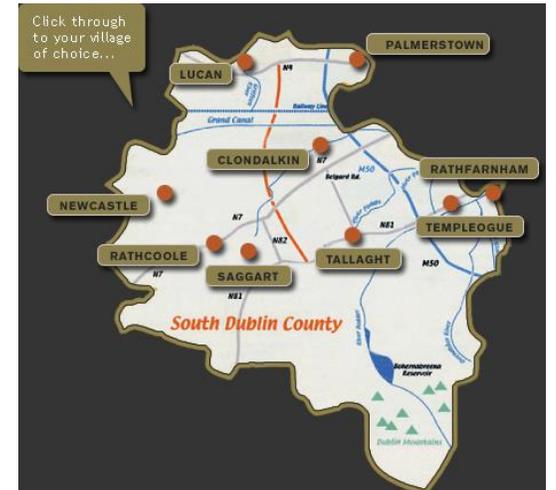
Named suppliers

Drinks pairing

Menus carry logos of Food Coast and WAW

Staff knowledge throughout – training key!

Arran – Beyond Auchrannie A Comparison with Citywest Hotel, South Dublin



Are visitors getting the genuine 'local' experience?

Citywest

777 bedrooms

Leisure club

Biggest conference facilities in Europe

Shop, multiple food options, golf and spa treatments

Excellent amenities but is the guest receiving a full Irish cultural experience?



Are visitors getting the genuine 'local' experience?

Auchrannie

Largest island resort in Scotland

Variety of accommodation, shop, activities

Award winning for customer service and accommodation quality

But does it reflect the destination and deliver a genuine island and Scottish experience?





Beyond local – tourism products along the Wild Atlantic Way – collaboration and joined up thinking

Wayfinding – apps and maps; Wild Atlantic Way 'passport'

Product development

Scenic signposting

Accommodation of all kinds

Isle of Skye – comparators with Donegal



Context – Donegal

Most projects we saw pre-date the collapse of the Irish economy

Severe economic depression from 2008-2009

Effort and hard work of the communities has been extraordinary

Development of the Wild Atlantic Way to direct and draw visitors in

Context – Isle of Skye

- Excess demand
- Insufficient supply and resources in 'hotspots'; glut of visitors to the same places
- Aim is dispersal rather than drawing more visitors in
- Skye needs visitors to go 'beyond local'



Skye Scenic Route – a solution?

- Viewpoint structures across a designated route on Skye (ref. Wild Atlantic Way viewpoints)
- Improve visitor experience
- Enhance rural economies and rural employment
- Create opportunities for tourism investment
- Showcase local culture
- Improve local infrastructure
- Proposed to be overseen by a local organisation e.g. Skye Connect
- Follows model of Scottish Scenic Routes
- Requires funding

Skye –
community
comparables
likely to
benefit from
redirection of
tourist traffic



An Crubh Café and Shop

<http://ancrubh.com/>

Local shop and café

Community space – to meet and socialise

Lottery and other funding

Local community strongly engaged

Lessons from Ireland?

- Development of a food trail
- Recognise, support and promote local food and drink suppliers



Camping Skye

<https://campingskye.com/>

Outskirts of Broadford village

Close to local amenities

Community owned

New training and education opportunities in the village

Sustainable source of income for the community

Lessons from Ireland?

- Funding and hard work from the community
- Community spirit at the heart of success

Success factors for a region – what we learned

Timing of funding applications

Food trails connected to tourism trails

Heritage and culture are integral

Diversity of product is key

Quality must be impeccable

Infrastructure support is vital and must be joined up (this was particularly noted by those island-based in our group)

Food and heritage connections

Central information points to tell the story and help with wayfinding



The national challenge – Scottish and Irish comparators

- Imperative to sell out of the country, not a big enough market within
- Small islands, small populations and need to look to other opportunities
- Common issues include chef skills and hospitality training in general
- Recognise need to adapt to international audiences
- Tourism significant element of GNP
- Common issues chef skills, rural infrastructure



Buy Irish!

Default position of most consumers to buy local and Irish

This is recognised by food producers, restaurants and other food outlets

Even large wholesalers put significant emphasis on this – Pallas is Ireland's largest food wholesaler -

<http://www.pallas-green.ie/>

Bord Bia, Irish Food Board, is both consumer and industry facing and has a range of tools for businesses to support purchase and promotion of Irish foods

<https://www.bordbia.ie>



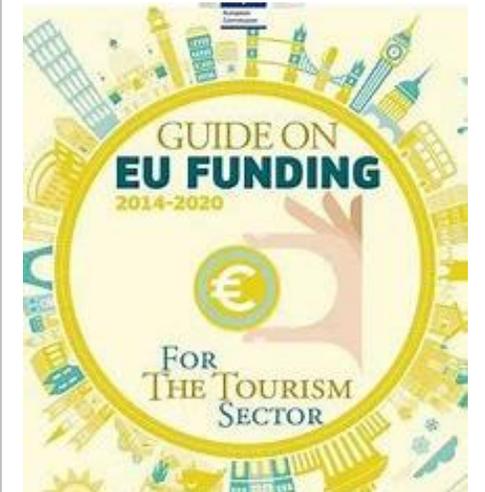
Success Factors – Ireland

Funding – local authorities, national and European funding – embraced and used to advantage

Food and tourism activity promoted nationally, locally and at micro-local level

Collaborative approach – food, tourism, education

Irish culture and identity embedded in all tourism activity – see logos!



Importance of Cultural Identity

Gaeltacht – Irish Gaelic speaking areas of Ireland

As experienced at <http://www.araschronain.ie/>

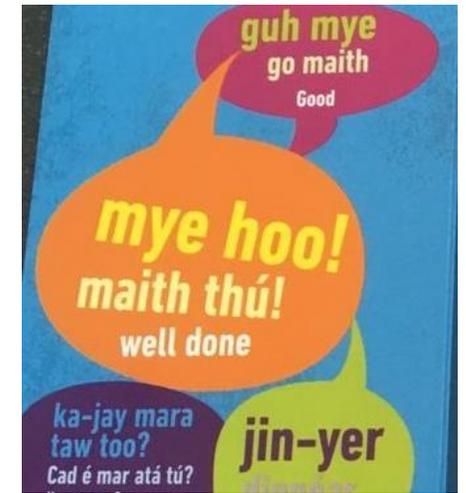
Strong emphasis on all traditional activities

Language

Music and dance

Culture including traditional food and drink

Part of educational experience

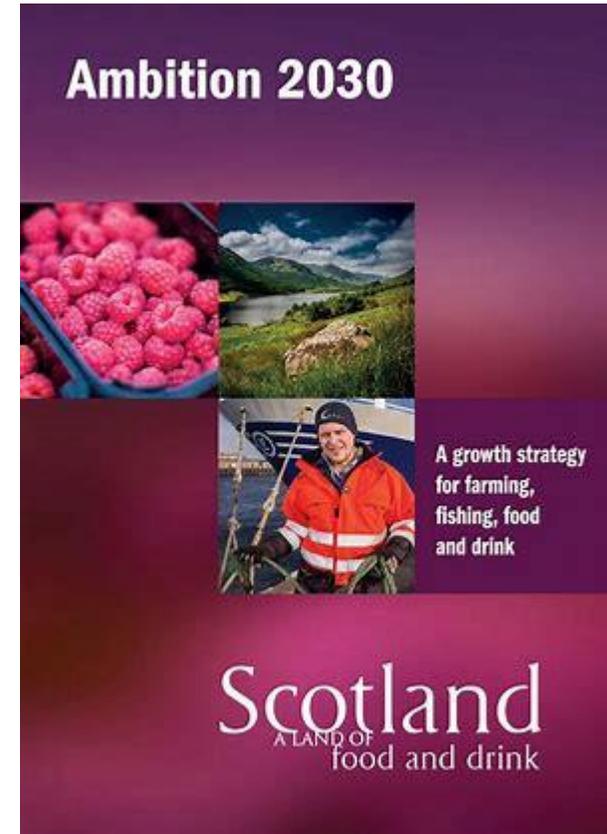


Building blocks to Scotland as a food destination – taking Scotland beyond local

Food Tourism Strategy

- Pillar 1: Sustainable local food supply chain
- Pillar 2: Quality products and experiences for all
- Pillar 3: Rich storytelling
- Pillar 4: Skilled & vibrant workforce
- Pillar 5: Innovative collaboration

All of which we have seen in Ireland during our learning journey



Ireland v Scotland?

Scots are self deprecating; Irish have learned not to be

Scotland's food culture is very young in any organised sense

There seems to be more positivity around food in Ireland

No complacency among the businesses seen

Concerted effort to go the extra mile

Public funds well used and communities working hard to put investment to good use

Training and education is tailored to needs of local industry (ref Killybegs)

Increases in employment in Ireland substantially carried by tourism

Food is seen as a mark or symbol of culture and heritage in Ireland



Our Conclusions

A business or destination can lift itself by looking 'beyond local'

Margins can be improved and profile raised

Visitors to destinations will buy values and experiences rather than products

Education supports success – train to retain staff

Restore culture and tradition and tell the story

Have fun – we did!

