

Research launched to uncover Scotland's food and drink heritage aims to help tourism recovery

In a quest to uncover Scotland's hidden food heritage, people across Scotland are being asked to rummage in family recipe books, to dig out photos of food events, and to share recommendations of local produce for a new research project called Food Heritage Scotland.

An online survey has been launched to help identify the nation's food and drink stories, and people across Scotland's mainland and island communities are being asked to take part. The goal of the research is to support tourism recovery by making it easier for tourism businesses and destinations to promote authentic food and drink heritage to potential visitors.

Food tourism has been identified as a priority in the recovery of the sector from Covid-19. The research aims to create a repository of Scotland's food and drink stories to help tell the story of Scotland through the food and drink we grow, create and serve. Members of the public are being asked to share their personal and family anecdotes, and people working within the industry are also being invited to take part.

The project is being led by marketing consultant Lorna Young, a specialist in food and rural tourism, and by Dr Valentina Bold, a leading expert in Scotland's cultural heritage. It's being funded by the Connect Local Regional Food Fund, with advisory support from Scotland Food & Drink.

Lorna commented:

"At this time of year in particular so many of us draw on family traditions and recipes, to mark seasonal celebrations and to share familiar flavours with loved ones. So, as people reach for family recipe books or prepare festive treats this Christmas, we're hoping that they snap a quick photo and upload it to share it as part of this research. These glimpses into our personal food traditions and experiences are part of Scotland's shared food heritage, and making those food and drink stories more visible and more accessible is what this project is all about.

"We want to gather Scotland's food and drink heritage for two reasons. First of all, we recognise that food tourism is a very important market for Scotland and identifying food tourism growth opportunities will help businesses and communities recover from the impact of covid and lockdown.

Secondly, we would like to see food and drink represented in the Year of Scotland's Stories 2022 celebrations, so this survey is an important first step in gathering a very authentic repository of information to help inform this."

Dr Valentina Bold, a consultant in Scottish cultural heritage, said:

"Scotland has many rich food heritage resources in manuscript and printed form – from the handwritten receipt books of the past and present, to the cookery books our well-known chefs produce. Online archives from the National Library of Scotland and the Tobar an Dualchas, are great resources for exploring food heritage too.

"What we want to do now is to fill the gaps with contemporary knowledge of what is so special about Scottish food. We want to understand the varieties of food we cook at home, what we eat when we go out, what food means to us everyday, and on special occasions, in our modern and diverse Scotland. We want to be able to tell Scots at home and visitors to Scotland about our rich traditions – of eating, and also of producing food and drink here. I am very excited to have these conversations with Scots of long and new standing, and to take this opportunity to understand what food heritage Scotland means today."

The online survey launches today and includes opportunities for people to upload photos and share anecdotes. Lorna added:

"We are particularly keen to hear about food and drink traditions that are connected to specific communities, and to connect with people whose family members worked in traditional food and drink industries, perhaps in jobs that no longer exist. We'd also love to hear from new Scots, and from people who are reinventing traditional food heritage for contemporary consumers."

The survey can be found at www.foodheritagescotland.com and is open till the end of January 2021. Survey responses will be used to inform a report and set of recommendations for the development of Scotland's food heritage over the next three years.

Ends

Notes for Editors

Food Heritage Scotland is supported by the Connect Local Regional Food Fund, which is financed by The Scottish Government, in partnership with industry, and has been created to promote local food and drink, in line with Ambition 2030.