

# Culinary Tourism



## What is Culinary Tourism?

Thousands of years ago, merchants traveled the Seven Seas, looking for foodstuffs to trade. Spices, wine, fruits and olive oil were the currencies of yore. Today, we unwittingly do much the same. However, modern travelers tend to prefer restaurants and wineries in place of pirate-infested trade routes.

Culinary tourism is not new. It is a subset of Agri-tourism that focuses specifically on the search for, and enjoyment of, *prepared food and drink*. Culinary tourism promotes all distinctive and impressive gastronomic experiences, not just those that have earned 4 stars or better. Previously overlooked, “culinary tourism” is an important new niche that fosters economic and community development and new intercultural insights. Culinary tourism can be found in rural or urban areas and should be available to visit all year ‘round.

Because of the variety and quality of Oregon’s agricultural products and a wide array of readily available complementary leisure travel products, Oregon is unique and strongly positioned to lead in the development of the culinary tourism niche in the United States.

## Why Culinary Tourism is Important

1. Nearly 100% of tourists dine out when traveling
2. Dining is consistently one of the top 3 favorite tourist activities
3. The higher the total bill, the more likely the patrons are tourists
4. High correlation between tourists who are interested in wine/cuisine and museums, shows, shopping, music and film festivals
5. Culinary tourists are highly likely to participate in outdoor recreation
6. Interest in culinary tourism spans to all age groups
7. Cuisine is the only art form that speaks to all five senses
8. Culinary tourists are “explorers”
9. Culinary “attractions” available year-round
10. Local cuisine is the #1 motivating factor in choosing a destination

## Examples of Culinary Tourism

Keep in mind that just because it is food or drink it is not necessarily “cuisine”. To foster culinary tourism, your food or beverage *experience* must be unique and memorable. Culinary tourism is much more than just restaurants and wineries. Here are some examples that would qualify as culinary tourism:

- Cooking classes or workshops with your product, either in an urban or rural setting
- Interesting tasting room at a winery, such as an old cave
- A restaurant in the countryside that makes the best huckleberry pancakes in the state — people drive from 3 surrounding states to get them
- A beer that is so unique, people make a pilgrimage to the brewery at least once in their lifetime
- A unique and memorable product from your orchard, farm or ranch, such as Grandma’s secret recipe for Pear Butter, which tastes better than anyone else’s
- A restaurant or eatery connected with your orchard, farm, or ranch that has a unique ambiance

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