Local food and tourism in Iceland
What – why – how?

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Entice: Exploring the Natural Tastes of Iceland
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An introduction – profile

• Laufey Haraldsdóttir
  – Lecturer/Assistant Professor at the Rural Tourism Department, Holar University College
  – Background: public health, food safety, rural tourism, folkloristic
  – Food and tourism main academic area today
    • Lecturing
    • Developing projects
    • Research
Holar University College (HUC)

- Historical, cultural, and ecclesiastical site
- A place of learning through the ages
- University College since 2007
- Present time:
  - Centre for education and research in three highly specialised fields; equine science, aqua-culture and aquatic biology, and tourism studies

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Iceland – Capitalizing on Nature

• Promoted as tourism destination since mid twentieth century
• In recent years increased emphasis on image-making through marketing exercises
  – Example:
  – Iceland naturally in the United States
    • Nature with different actors (such as food products) taking part to enact the image
  – Various food tourism projects around the country
    • Emphasising local products and knowledge
    • Mixture of tradition and innovation to make a place narratives
  – Food and Fun project, New Nordic Food and more....
    (Haraldsdóttir and Gunnarsdóttir, 2013)
Why food and tourism

• New patterns of tourism
  – A move from large-scale packaging of standardised leisure

• Consumers (tourists) actively engaged in new forms of tourism experience – beyond the visual engagement

• Food tourism characterises these new tourism experiences

(Sally Everett, 2008:338-340)
Why local food and tourism?

• Growing interest in culinary products and traditions
  – Food more important factor in influencing tourists’ motivations for travelling

• Regional products and dishes feature as unique sales argument in destination branding
  – Emblematic expression of a place
  – Traditional meals `symbolic value`; expression on local culture

(Gyimóthy and Mykletun, 2009:260)
Local food as part of the ‘alternative food network’

• Connected to sustainable tourism and the appeal to visitor’s desire for authenticity
  (Rebecca Sims, 2009:321)

• Symbolises the place and culture of a destination
  (Rebecca Sims, 2009:321)

• By buying local we address the energy question
  (Jeff Pratt, 2007:288)
Food and tourism in Iceland

• Rapid development since the turn of the century
• Regions
  – Various food tourism projects since 2004
• The country
  – Nature tourist destination
  – -> The marriage of food and nature
• The Nordic Countries
  – A joint program New Nordic Food
• Individuals
  – Tourism entrepreneurs
  – Small scale production
  – Design
Local/Regional projects
Education is about

• Economic issues and benefits for the destination and entrepreneurs
  – While the relationship between food and tourism is at first glance obvious, in productive terms the relationship needs to be integrated into a strategy for local economic development that seeks to maximize economic and social leverage between producers and the tourism industry
    (Hall, Mitchell, and Sharples, 2003:28)

• Knowing the customer
  – Understanding tourists needs and wants in terms of food consumption is of paramount importance to hospitality businesses
    (Mak, Lumbers, Eves and Chang, 2012:935)
Education is about

• Culinary innovation and development
  – Identity, image making and creation of stories  
    (Byrkjeflot, S.Pedersen and Svejenova, 2013: )

• Supply chain
  – The linkage of producers and distributors in the context of 
    the creation of a commodity  
    (Smith and Xiao, 2008:291)

• Visibility, performance and `embodied´
  experience
  – Food tourism should be regarded as an embodied form of 
    tourism, capable of providing an embodied experience of 
    place, perhaps more powerful than many other 
    commodities  
    (Sally Everett, 2008:341)
Developing a **Rural Culinary Tourism Product**: Considerations and Resources for Success

• ............and

  – Multiple players
  – Government involvement
  – Cooperation and trust
  – Champion (Leadership)
  – Long-Term Approach
  – Funding

  (Murray and Haraldsdottir, 2004)
Future development and research in Iceland

• The demand
  – Profiling our guests better
    • Needs and desires regarding food and drink

• The supply
  – Tourism entrepreneurs
    • What, how, why?
    • Context/environment, motivations, visions, requirements, methods……..
  – Research under construction 😊
Thank you....................
References