Food Tourism in the Caribbean: Unlocking the Potential

CWA Agrotourism Seminar
10th October, 2013
Guyana

Presented by: Gail N. Henry
Sustainable Tourism Product Specialist
Caribbean Tourism Organization
FOOD TOURISM

• Scope of Food Tourism
• Why Food Tourism?: Benefits, Successes, Demand and Potential
• Caribbean Food Tourism Strategy Recommendations
• Key Issues and Challenges
• Lessons Learned from Leading Food Tourism Destinations
FT Product Types

- Cooking schools/classes
- Food attractions
- Food events
- Food lodging
- Culinary media
- Food & drink clubs
- Food processors
- Food retail
- Food tours
- Food destinations
- F&B businesses
- Farms, farmers markets
Life Needs The Caribbean
ISLAND CUISINE INFUSED WITH INTERNATIONAL FLAVORS

Sep 19, 2013 by Alina Garcia

Although fresh fish and fruity drinks are typically associated with Caribbean cuisine, there is so much more that adds to the island flavor. Because of the Caribbean’s strong African, Spanish, French, and British influences, their eclectic cuisine reflects a complex mix of all of these different cultures. You won’t be able to find food like this anywhere else in the world. Here are just a few picks for unique dining experiences in the Caribbean that display this combination of cultures:

**Boston Jerk Centre- Port Antonio, Jamaica**

If you’re familiar with the famous Jamaican jerk dish, you won’t find it anywhere better than the Boston Jerk Centre. After all, this is where it was invented. This unpretentious beach hut surrounded by pimento, lox and open pits is the perfect place to enjoy tasty chicken, pork.
DISH OF THE DAY

SPICE IT UP

THE CARIBBEAN IS FAMOUS FOR ITS ADVENTUOUS FLAVOURS AND MUGURUS. FROM GUMBO CONCH TO GRILLED OCTOPUS.

JUNE MEAL

Economists reveal that the Caribbean is a major player in global tourism. The region’s diverse cultures and cuisines attract millions of visitors each year. From spicy jerk chicken in Jamaica to the delicate seafood of the Bahamas, there’s something for every taste.

GET YOUR FIVE A DAY THE CARIBBEAN WAY

Food is a cornerstone of Caribbean culture. Whether it’s a fresh fruit smoothie in the morning or a hearty fish stew at sunset, the region’s cuisine is a delightful blend of flavors.

SPICE IT UP

The distinctive flavors of the Caribbean are a result of the unique blend of African, European, and Native American influences. This fusion of cultures has created a cuisine that is as diverse as it is delicious.

LOCAL INGREDIENTS

The garden is the foundation of the Caribbean kitchen. From sugarcane and coconuts to peppers and okra, the region’s agriculture provides the raw materials for its vibrant cuisine.

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Guide to The Caribbean 2013 (#4 Reason to Visit)

TOP 10 REASONS TO VISIT

WHATSOEVER YOUR PASSION, THE CARIBBEAN CAN OFFER YOU THE PERFECT REASON TO VISIT.

1. HIGH-BRILLIANT LUXURY
   Want to be pampered? The Caribbean is the place.

2. SOCIAL PEOPLE
   The vibe of meetings and celebrations at all

3. CUISINE AND WINES
   Enjoy on-board gourmet

4. FOOD
   Enjoy all you can eat, all day long.

5. BEACHES
   Take a break from it all and soak up the sun.

6. SPORTS AND ADVENTURES
   Challenge yourself with water sports and

7. CARIBBEAN HIGHLIGHTS
   Some of the best attractions in the

8. BEAUTY AND NATURE
   Explore the natural beauty of the

9. CULTURE AND HISTORY
   Experience the rich cultural heritage of

10. RELAXATION AND RELAXATION
    Dive into the tranquility of the

The only water park in Punta Cana!
Caribbean Food Tourism Strategy

• Need for ongoing tourism product diversification to enhance global competitiveness and sustainability of Caribbean tourism

• Identification of lucrative segments that can build on strengths of Caribbean tourism assets, differentiate destinations, capitalize on market opportunities, create linkages, reduce leakage

• Visitors MUST EAT and demand for food tourism products/experiences is growing globally
Benefits

- Strengthened tourism sector and enhanced local **job opportunities** through appealing food tourism experiences;
- New **destination marketing** platform for the region that will enhance and support national tourism product diversification efforts;
- **Financial benefits** to tourism operators/suppliers participating in food tourism;
- Potential for local community and other organizations to participate in **revenue generation** from food tourism;
Benefits

• Positive linkages and spinoff benefits to agriculture, restaurant and food/spirits manufacturing, culture and heritage, and spa and wellness entities in the destination;

• Further means to celebrate and highlight local culture in the form of authentic local food experiences; and

• Greater awareness of food products in destinations with possible export benefits for local producers.
What is the level of interest within your destination in food tourism as a tourism development strategy?

- Extremely Important: 35%
- Very Important: 40%
- Somewhat Important: 20%
- Slightly Important: 5%
### Snapshot of Food Tourism in Caribbean Destination Marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries (16)</th>
<th>Sector explored</th>
<th>Have strategy</th>
<th>Market currently</th>
<th>Product develop</th>
<th>Private sector programs</th>
<th>Have inventory</th>
<th>Have economic data</th>
<th>Have other research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anguilla</td>
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<td>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
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<td>Turks &amp; Caicos</td>
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<td><strong>Total Yes</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Percent</strong></td>
<td><strong>56.3%</strong></td>
<td><strong>18.8%</strong></td>
<td><strong>50.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>56.3%</strong></td>
<td><strong>75.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>50.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>37.50%</strong></td>
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Food Tourism SWOT Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Diverse geographies, climates, histories, cultures, ethnic groups and</td>
<td>• No Caribbean food brand or profile</td>
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<tr>
<td>languages of CTO member countries</td>
<td>• Lack of awareness throughout region of food tourism potential</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Caribbean food and culture inseparably linked</td>
<td>• Lack of in-depth understanding of food tourism sector among CTO</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Amazing multi-cultural diversity and uniqueness of food, food stories,</td>
<td>leadership and membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>food preparation techniques, etc.</td>
<td>• Lack of leadership, linkages and information sharing in food tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Vibrant agricultural sector provides 1000s of food tourism products and</td>
<td>sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>venues</td>
<td>• Lack of food tourism research – regional and national assets inventories,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Growing number of food-related festivals, competitions, other events</td>
<td>economic information, visitor studies, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Year-round rich variety of local fresh fruit, vegetables, herbs</td>
<td>• Lack of regional and national food tourism strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Abundance of and reputation for marine food products; use of sustainable</td>
<td>• Lack of market-ready food tourism products &amp; experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>harvesting techniques</td>
<td>• Lack of international and local chef level culinary skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Region’s reputation for spicy, flavorful food</td>
<td>• Lack of modern food production and processing facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High and growing interest in developing food tourism among CTO</td>
<td>• Seasonality, quality, dependency on imports, linkages issues that</td>
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<tr>
<td>member countries</td>
<td>compromise availability of food products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Several Caribbean destinations place emphasis on food tourism,</td>
<td>• Lack of food tourism resources – market information, manuals, how to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing regional experience and leadership</td>
<td>guides, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Post-secondary institutions have active programs and are interested</td>
<td>• Lack of quality and safety standards for food products</td>
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<tr>
<td>in food tourism e.g. U of West Indies, national vocational institutes</td>
<td>• Lack of funding to support food tourism business alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accommodation and other tourism infrastructure in place</td>
<td>• Lack of funding to support food tourism product development and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Large existing international visitor market</td>
<td>marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accommodation and other tourism infrastructure in place</td>
<td>• Lack of inter-regional passenger and freight transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>Threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capitalize on growing international interest in food tourism</td>
<td>Impact of climate change, natural disasters on agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversify from Caribbean sun, sand, sea tourism product</td>
<td>Impact of rising gas and oil prices on tourism, agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build on nature and culture experiential tourism trend</td>
<td>Impact of global economic issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase visitor length of stay and return visits</td>
<td>New UK Air Passenger Duty (APD), other taxes reducing Europe outbound travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Through branding and regional collaboration, position Caribbean as a leading destination for food travel</td>
<td>Uneven food quality and safety assurance among destinations creates consumer protection, product development and marketing issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand and enhance CHTA's Taste of Caribbean event</td>
<td>Local producers struggle to be price competitive with international suppliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create signature foods/drinks for each CTO destination</td>
<td>Unreliable supply of local products</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrate food tourism into CTO overseas marketing</td>
<td>Competition from other destinations pursuing food tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership by CTO to connect, professionalize, develop and market food tourism sector</td>
<td>Wide spectrum of levels of interest in and attention to food tourism within destinations challenges regional approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand tourism offerings for diaspora, domestic and regional markets</td>
<td>Tourism budgets cuts compromise destinations' ability to pursue food tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand on successes – chefs, celebrities, events, products, experiences with strong international/regional profiles</td>
<td>Destinations fail to recognize the value of food tourism and do not support development of the sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise global profile of Caribbean food products</td>
<td>Fractured, dispersed nature of Caribbean tourism industry and of food tourism industry partners creates coordination and linkages challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTO funders, partners (e.g. OAS, IICA, CARICOM) strongly endorse and will support food tourism development</td>
<td>Lack of cooperation between key national and regional sectors that support food tourism, including tourism, agriculture, health, education, standards, services and processing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creates employment and business opportunities, including for women and youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creates economic opportunities for local communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linkages to health and wellness, performing and visual arts, agro-tourism, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation of unique made-in-the-Caribbean food tourism products e.g., regional/local rum, spice, seafood trails</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of a regional culinary tourism institute/centre of excellence</td>
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</table>
Food Tourism Successes

• Caribbean heritage and culture influences diversity of cuisine available (Chinese, Indian, Syrian/Lebanese, African, First People, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch etc.)

• Range of existing food tourism products – restaurants (Including Zaggat rated)/cafes; food, rum and wine festivals and competitions/events e.g. Taste of the Caribbean, CTO Rum & Rhythm Festivals, food trails, plantation and rum factory tours, promotion of national dishes etc.

• Caribbean celebrities promoting Caribbean food directly/indirectly – e.g. Usain Bolt - Jamaica (yam); Caribbean celebrity chefs abroad
Economic Impact

USA
$52 billion

UNWTO
30% of tourism revenues

Scotland
£700 million

UK
US$8 billion

Ireland
£2 billion
Economic Impact

- Eating local food has a 3:1 impact on local economy (Local Food Plus)
- Consuming wines has an 12:1 impact (Wine Council of Ontario)
- Average Culinary Tourist spends, double that of a generic tourist, and 40% more on accommodations (Ryerson University)
Trends Driving FT

• Authentic Travel Demand
• Health & Sustainability
• Inconspicuous Consumption
• Globalism & Multiculturalism
• Food Programming
Food Tourism Market Size

71% of all US travellers; 17%-33% are Food Tourists
Ont Wine & Cuisine, 2007c

18% of US and Cdn travellers

71% of US tourists
TIA et al, Culinary Travel, 2007

74% of all Cdn travellers; 16-37% are Food Tourists
Ont Wine & Cuisine, 2007c

53% of UK tourists
WTM, Food Tourism, 2007
Food Tourist Characteristics

- Male & Female
- 35 to 64 years
- Middle to High Income
- Higher levels of education
- High Internet Use
- High Spending on Food: TIA study 50%
Mission and Vision

**Mission:** To position the Caribbean as a leading global destination for food tourism and diverse authentic, local and culturally integrated food tourism experiences

**Vision:** The Caribbean’s authentic and memorable food tourism experiences enrich our active, interested, and caring guests.
Strategic Objectives

1. To establish a sustainable Caribbean Food Tourism Alliance (CFTA) with the programs and resources that will foster and support market driven and competitive tourism product development throughout the Caribbean.

2. To build awareness of food tourism’s potential and positive impacts in the CTO member countries and the region.

3. To encourage and support member countries to develop and strengthen existing and new unique, authentic and market ready food tourism experiences.
Strategic Objectives

4. To **facilitate partnerships** with educational institutions, and the food and beverage, agricultural, cultural and related sectors in addition to member country governments and their tourism sectors.

5. To establish a comprehensive **training, certification, and quality assurance system** as appropriate to support food tourism, delivered through regional and member country educational institutions.

6. To **encourage local enterprise and community participation** in food tourism, including an emphasis on youth and women.

7. In all cases, to **build on existing initiatives** and avoid duplication.
Regional Components

1. Marketing/Branding
2. Business and Regulatory Environment
3. Training and Education
4. Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening
5. Product Development
6. Investment and Incentives
Based on a **public/private sector partnership** approach:

- **Caribbean Food Tourism Alliance (CFTA)**
  - Chaired by the CTO during the initial launch and start-up phase
  - Comprised of representatives from entities ranging from tourism and the food and beverage industry to educational institutions and major travel trade players with interests in the Caribbean.
  - Supported and guided by a Secretariat and a Board, the alliance is primarily a facilitator and coordinator, assisting member countries in the six regional strategy component areas.
National Institutional Structure

- **Food Tourism Alliances** at the national level in each member country to develop national food tourism strategies and implement food tourism product development and marketing activities.

- **Food Tourism Enterprises** – participating at the national level in their destinations, and including tourism and hospitality suppliers, food producers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders.

- **Communities** – participating at the grassroots level and offering a local cultural/heritage experience integrated with local foods.
Key Issues and Challenges

• Coordinating Body:
  o Caribbean Food Tourism Alliance/Association
  o National Food Tourism Alliance/Associations

• Funding to Enhance/Develop Products:
  o Donor agency grants and loans
  o Public sector funding
  o Private sector funding/investment opportunities
  o Revenue generation activities

• Capacity Building – food tourism training (chefs, tourism product development, marketing, standards etc.)

• Ongoing Research – market trends, product database, chef database

• Promotion – Caribbean Tourism Development Co., (regional) plus NTO promotional activities (websites, trade fairs, mobile apps, social media, culinary publications etc.)
| Rationale for Food Tourism Strategy | Based on global trends, case studies of successful food tourism strategies and their implementation approaches, interviews with the travel trade to better understand the interest level and product expectations, interviews with key agencies/organizations involved in food tourism initiatives including the CHTA, IICA, and OAS, and a survey of destinations in the Caribbean (16 countries responded to the survey). |
| Food Tourism Strategy | As described in Section 6 of this report. |
| Preparing the Implementation Plan and Resourcing the Strategy | It is suggested that the CTO from a small working group to complete these actions, including representation from the selected key partners. |
| | Preparation of the business plan and implementation plan including work plan/budget for use in attracting sufficient funding to properly launch and implement the strategy for the first two years. Undertaking key partnership and funding sources consultations. Finalize the launch and start-up funding. |
| Mobilizing for Implementation | Undertake final partnership and member country consultations. Establish the Caribbean Food Tourism Alliance (CFTA) and Implementation Team. |
| Project Launch and Start-up for the First Two Years | CFTA commences completion of the regional inventory and profile in collaboration with member countries. Complete an impact analysis and Food Tourism Benefits paper that can be used for public as well as targeted awareness programs. |
| | In parallel with the regional inventory, and taking the results into account as they are completed, CFTA commences implementation of the various Strategy components described in Section 6.2 of this report (and adjusted based on subsequent consultations and the results of the regional inventory and profile): |
| | • The Market Environment |
| | • Competitive Environment |
| | • Marketing/Branding |
| | • Business & Regulatory Environment |
| | • Training and Education |
| | • Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening |
| | • Product Development |
| | • Investment and Incentives |
| | Member countries commence their own food tourism development programs, generally as described in Section 6.4 of this report, and adjusted based on consultations, the results of the regional inventory and profile, and local situations. |
| Establish the Ongoing CFTA Structure | During the course of the two year Start-up, the CFTA should consider how to structure the CFTA for sustainability and ensure ongoing, stable funding support. This should include a comprehensive review of progress as the Start-up term nears completion to inform preparation of the ongoing CFTA structure. |
Additional Steps

• Obtain buy in for food tourism strategy from CTO’s Board of Directors and Council of Ministers
• Further develop Action Plan
• Have ongoing discussions with other international, regional and national level entities to obtain technical, financial and other support for Food Tourism Strategy and Action Plan
• Link Caribbean Food Tourism Strategy to Regional Agrotourism and Heath, Wellness and Spa; and Experiential Tourism strategies and initiatives
Lessons from Leading Food Tourism Destinations

• **Business organizations** – all of the destinations have strong food-focussed business organizations/alliances leading and supporting food tourism development. The organizations are comprised of a diverse set of public and private food sector partners.

• **Financial sustainability** – all of the food tourism business organizations are funded through a mix of government, membership, projects and earned revenues. Even though they have been in existence for over a decade, all of them remain partially dependent on government and grant funding.
Lessons from Leading Food Tourism Destinations

• **Product development** - a key facet of the destinations’ food tourism development programs. Standards are in place to ensure food quality, service, and hygiene standards. The destinations focus on creating interactive and enriching experiences that uncover and feature the gems and secrets of each destination’s food culture in a manner that is entertaining, educational and connects people to the local culture and people.

• **Marketing** – perhaps the most important focus of their food tourism development programs. Marketing initiatives focus on food tourism events, awards programs and ceremonies, visitor guides, websites, social media, and media and PR initiatives.
Thank you for your attention...
Any questions?

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