

West Cork and the Fostering of Irish Regional Culinary Tourism

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West Cork: A Place Apart

Ireland's Southwest coast has long been a favorite visitor destination. One particular appealing locale is in a part of County Cork that is rugged yet lush, exposed yet mild in climate, forested and with open beaches: the far Southwesterly region of West Cork. Here dichotomies compliment one another in a way that creates a very unusual set of climatic conditions. The Gulf Stream brings moist and temperate weather all year round to West Cork so that, for example, in spite of being considerably further north than St. John's, Newfoundland, snow and ice are a rarity in Southwestern Ireland. Not only palm trees, but the Kauri Pine and Silver Tree Fern native to sub-tropical New Zealand, grow particularly well. Indeed, the Pepperwood shrub now calls this area home and thrives more vigorously than in its native New Zealand. These "foreign" plants can be seen thriving in a spectacular part of West Cork called Garinish Island in Glengarriff Bay. Such a unique climate not only enriches the physical landscape but draws visitors to this island and other parts of West Cork, some of whom decide to make it their home. Like the foreign plants on Garinish Island, many of these new "transplants" to the West Cork region have thrived.

Newcomers over the last five decades came for many reasons; some had specific motivations while others were simply seeking a change in lifestyle. Amongst these arrivals were highly creative and passionate individuals seeking a space to discover or develop skills, many of which revolved around food and farming. Newcomers recognized raw materials to be utilised in the rich pastures created by the land and climate. This joining of landscape and foodscape led to the development of a lively contemporary local food culture and now encapsulates a vital aspect of what makes West Cork such a singular place.

Thought to be *the* birthplace of the modern Irish food movement, West Cork has often been seen as "a place apart" from the rest of the country. At the very least it strives to distinguish itself as such, with the West Cork regional Enterprise Board and Fushia Brands taking "A Place Apart" as its regional motto. Cheesemaker Gianna Ferguson of Gubbeen Farm in Schull remarks that "West Cork has always been a very, very open community and has thrived on opening its doors to all the different people who've come" (Ferguson 2007). Gianna's sentiment reiterates the feeling that many attach to this "place apart." With the influx of a diverse group of people (particularly in the 1970s-1990s), a unique food culture was born in a place that fostered residents' creative and sometimes untapped entrepreneurial abilities, especially in the field of food production.

With the modern "re-birth" of the Irish food movement as it occurred in West Cork, this culturally vibrant part of Ireland became a destination for food tourism; those in search of an "authentic" Irish

food experience regularly list West Cork as their top place to seek out fresh, local, and seasonal Irish food. While the areas in Ireland where one can experience such food continue to grow, this type of food performance took shape much earlier in West Cork than in other places. “A Taste of West Cork” food festival in the busy market town of Skibbereen is Ireland’s longest running food festival, which has brought together food producers and consumers for over ten years. The festival draws both visitors and locals every September to “discover the ‘magic ingredients’ of West Cork” (West Cork Food Festival 2012). Though the festival is certainly a major tourist attraction, it allows visitors to experience more than just local and natural food. Some food producers not only sell their products directly to the public, they also offer tours and walks around their farms and local area. Yet while “tourism needs to be intentional” (Long 2004) in that one needs to choose to create products which generate visitors and a livelihood, the socio-economic outcome of such food performance was not initially the intention of every local food producer I met in West Cork. Most saw their production not simply as a means of income but as both a more inspired way of living and of being connected to the landscape and to a community of like-minded people. In this sense, the framework of performance has shifted in recent years; culinary tourism is a result of a more active type of consumption and cultural exchange among insiders and outsiders. Open dialogue between producer and consumer has contributed to the tangible and lively manner in which one can now experience Irish food culture. This change in performance is demonstrated in the sheer number of producers employing various local ingredients. In this research note, I reflect on aspects of West Cork’s food culture. Taking as my focus cheesemaking, a craft that’s revival in Ireland had its origins in West Cork, I consider the growing awareness of local food and the importance of food memories, as well as speculate on the importance of an outsider perspective to the development of a regional food culture.

Cheesemaking: Creating New Taste Memories

The West Cork region was historically known (especially in the 17th-19th centuries) for its large number of dairies. These began as home outfits for excess family farm milk production and developed into larger scale regional creameries that brought milk and milk products, specifically butter, to Cork city and then on to the rest of Europe and the world. This dairy export established Cork as synonymous with high quality, salted butter; there is even a Butter Museum in Cork city to attest to this fame. Although as Regina Sexton notes, “the seventeenth century was to see the decline of the native cheese-making tradition” (2001:98), traditional and domestic skills often associated with women such as dairying (cheesemaking, buttermaking) have experienced a great resurgence in West Cork. The role of women in creating and maintaining the culture of buttermaking in the historic past is reflected in the present-day cheesemaking that is being done mostly by women. Memory of the role of butter in Ireland is also on view in West Cork, where a display of various metal replicas of milk containers and butter churns can be seen on the side of the road when driving between certain towns. In this instance, the area’s historic milk and butter production is a type of modern day regional “branding” which also shapes a regional cultural memory through an identifiable symbol of the area.

Two of the food producers I spoke with during visits to West Cork are Gianna Ferguson, originally from Spain and now a maker of Gubbeen cheese, and Jeffa Gill, of British origins and a maker of Durrus cheese. The women highlight this modern day revival of dairying in the form of cheesemaking. Giana came to West Cork through marriage to a local farmer, and started to make cheese in the 1970s; it was a time when no one except Veronica Steele (considered the first Irish artisan cheesemaker) on the Beara Peninsula of West Cork was even making cheese. To this day, Giana's family is very active in local and national food endeavours including the Slow Food Movement. Her son, Fingal, makes a variety of charcuterie from their own pigs. Jeffa began making her cheese in 1979 around the same time as Gianna, but decided to try raw milk cheesemaking as a hobby at a time in Ireland when it was almost unheard of. These women were pioneers in Irish cheesemaking. Like many cheesemakers in the West Cork area today, Jeffa and Giana were new to the art and did not have personal experience or a family history of cheesemaking on which to base their craft. Yet as is often the case in the food culture of Ireland more generally today, those who started from "scratch" were able to develop a very individual and creative practice for themselves. A common motivation to create something original for the region and themselves has led these producers to forge meaningful relationships within the larger community of cheesemakers in Ireland while their renewed interest in traditional knowledge has created new and significant food experiences for both the maker and the culinary tourist.

Like Gianna and Jeffa, many other local food producers, and in particular cheesemakers, are women and are often non-Irish nationals. While in the past Ireland has not been usually associated with a rich and varied food culture, in recent years it has regained a better sense of its traditional and historical food memories. Part of this resurgence in food culture can likely be attributed to dedicated food producers. But did it take these producers (or "creators" as some have called them), to fashion a way of life (with food at the center) to restore and recreate Ireland's "lost" or forgotten foodways? How have West Cork producers reignited an interest in Irish food, established a regional identity, and created new food experiences for the culinary tourist? How has the creation of new food memories helped to reshape the individual and collective Irish food experience?

As I think about the way rural space can be used to create regional development, aspects of Long's studies of culinary tourism are applicable. In her introduction to the *Journal of American Folklore's* special issue "Food and Identity in the Americas," Long notes that individuals can use food "to better define the boundaries between themselves and others" (2009:7). This defining of boundaries is evidenced in the signs one sees travelling around West Cork with the iconic bright fuchsia flower as its emblem stating: "West Cork: A Place Apart." These signs are symbolic because they distinguish this part of Ireland from others. Such marketing strategies are not only a means of gaining cultural capital but also evoking a singular type of experience that one can have once they enter this region. Once a tourist within the "boundaries," one has the opportunity to discover this food community and in turn create memories from experiences becomes possible. A visitor to the area can experience the food in a myriad of ways. Whether meeting a cheesemaker at the local farmer's market in Schull or staying in a one-of-a-kind bed and breakfast where the morning's offerings of sausage, rashers (bacon), and black

pudding come from a nearby farm, participatory acts with locals and their food characterize the region; as Long notes, “meaning emerges out of relationships” (Long 2009:7).

The practice of making “meaning” calls to mind Holly Everett’s discussion of Newfoundland berry-picking (Everett 2007). Everett’s study connects to themes that are relevant to my discussion: links of food and nostalgia and more particularly, intersections of context, food and memory. Because it is one’s memory of food that often drives the exploration or search for it, food memories become embedded within the framework of culinary tourism. Such memories are (re)experienced and recreated depending on the context. In this circumstance, the drive for something from the rural Irish foodways past was shaped into something new (in this context a cheese) by individuals specifically seeking out West Cork as a place to make their home and to create a livelihood. It was those who came early on (in the 1960s-70s) who established a tangible connection with the regional landscape and people. This anchoring to place planted the seed for many future food producers, artists, and eventually tourists who would also come to experience this “place apart.”

By creating specialty products like cheese that embody the local landscape through their nuanced flavors, West Cork food producers have played a major part in an emerging Irish food culture. This (re)creating of a new kind of food culture and extending a regional foodscape experience to outsiders, in turn creates a unique kind of culinary tourism, shaped by the food “memories” or personal history of the food producer. These individual food stories are reflected in the diversity of the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the food producers that have made West Cork their home over the years. The diverse “outside” experiences of these food producers before they came to West Cork now influence the regional products they create with Irish ingredients in a more international or ethnic style: Irish chorizo, Italian style cured meats and sausages, Irish Goudas, and French influenced chocolate. West Cork has become a place where “global” food experiences are not uncommon yet the context is still uniquely Irish.

New Irish foodstuffs reveal the manner in which “tourism is a process”; the creation and presentation of a West Cork food is part of a cultural exchange from producer to consumer (Long 2004:12). And this “process” has helped to change and reshape the nature of Irish food culture. In this way, culinary tourism is a means of creating new food memories---ones that are quite different from the historical past---for the producer, the tourist, the region and the country.

Outsider Perspectives and Regional Food Identity

If “foodways bind individuals together, define the limits of [a] group’s outreach and identity, distinguish in-group from out-group, serve as a medium of inter-group communication, celebrate culture cohesion and provide a context for performance of group rituals” (Brown and Mussell 1984: 5) then the “in-group” culture of West Cork food producers is a domain where this process occurs. Only the “in-group” was at one point in time the “out-group.” Within the framework of culinary tourism, one observes the role of insider/outsider constantly shifting depending on one’s perspective. While

many of the cheese producers I interviewed were originally outsiders to West Cork, they could also now be seen by some as “insiders” due to their many years living and working in the region. Viewed through this lens, the culinary tourist then becomes the outsider with the producer now identifying themselves as an “insider.”

That said, it was “outside” perspectives that brought about the new regional food identity that has come to symbolise West Cork today. The idea of creating something new from what was absent in the food culture was to be the catalyst for the contemporary Irish food “revolution.” This process of creating a new home or new space, and in turn a new food culture, brings together the concepts of culinary tourism, regional identity, and local economic development. One way to look at these factors being enacted and negotiated is within the boundaries of region. Viewed in this way, one can more clearly measure “continuity and change” within the local food culture (Brown and Mussell 1984:8). Brown and Mussell assert that in order to better study foodways, the researcher needs to figure out “*how to decipher the metaphoric meaning* encoded in a group’s patterned food system” (1984:9). It seems one of the most utilized methods in folklore research is to do this through the “*internal perspective of the group itself*” (Brown and Mussell 1984:9). “To determine the boundary definitions” of West Cork, one must of course consider a geographical boundary which separates the group from other parts of Ireland. The more complicated definition, however, lies in defining the cultural boundary of the group (Brown and Mussell 1984:5). How does one define this group? By region or ethnicity or both? I suggest that both region and being an outsider to the area or having an *outside* perspective best describes the group rather than a specific ethnicity. Furthermore, Brown and Mussell assert that “there is substantially more scholarly agreement on the markers of ethnic identity than on regional configurations” (Brown and Mussell 1984:5) so is it perhaps through their self-identification with the region that these food producers and cheesemakers create their own sense of aesthetic boundaries *within* the region itself? Likewise by examining “group identity as a *process* rather than as a series of relatively static markers” one can begin to instead look at “the internal and external meanings of symbolic group interaction” (Brown and Mussell 1984:5).

The creation and presentation of a particular food product establishes a connection is established between the producer and the consumer. By looking at the type of new connections that are established through this culinary exchange, one sees how through the lens of performance, the food itself is on display. For example, when local cheeses like Gubbeen and Durrus are sold at the Schull farmer’s market or the “Taste of West Cork Food Festival” in Skibbereen one can often meet the food producer, learn about the cheese and have an individual taste experience which is extremely localized: the milk to make the cheese and the producer who aged the cheese are both from a nearby town. In this way, a familiar food like cheese becomes an experience that is not only a very tied to region but a product that can take on different meanings as it moves from the insider (producer) to an outsider (tourist) perspective. Part of what makes the cheese an “outside” product to the tourist, is the way it is presented. Here one is reminded of Lucy Long’s discussion of the tourist gaze in culinary tourism, and how it can be employed so that familiar foods are seen in new and different ways. And it is through tourism that one can see a “way of viewing and experiencing that attends to contrast with the

familiar” (Long 2004:12). Is this outside perspective part of what enabled West Cork to become a unique food-focused region? Does seeing these specifically regional cheeses as “exotic” or different from other Irish food products set West Cork and its producers “apart” from other areas? Are the “outside” food producers both the creator and the tourist in the sense that it was their intentional, outside gaze that allowed them to see the potential for regional Irish food products? When Long describes how a conceptual framework can be used to evoke a sense of otherness in regional food products, Gubbeen cheese can serve as an example of this. By framing and giving the cheese a West Cork local geographical placename like “Gubbeen,” which is derived from the Irish word gobin meaning a small mouthful, as well as a reference to the local bay and farm where it is made, the cheese appears more exotic and curious to the outsider (Long 2004).

Discovering Irish? Food Culture in Cork

Not only is the notion of an “outsider” central to the development of what is now recognized as West Cork regional food, it is the perspective from which I came to discover and know about Irish food. Although I have been living in Ireland for about eight years, I first came to know this “place apart” on a family holiday when I was a study abroad student from Dickinson College in Pennsylvania at University College Cork in 1999. In fact, my first experience with Irish food was in Cork city at the famous English Market where one could see and purchase traditional and local foods such as drisheen (sheep’s blood sausage), spiced beef and tripe. I also remember being very interested in a number of more common foods that were still unusual to me: the array of wholesome brown and soda breads, the exciting variety of cheeses like Milleens, Durrus and Gubbeen (all made by women), and the beautiful fruit and vegetables, particularly the somewhat unusual ones such as Jerusalem artichokes, giant Savoy cabbages, and rhubarb, all from producers throughout Cork County. I recall thinking: this is Ireland, who knew there was such an abundance of lovely food here? The English Market really surprised and left quite an impression on me. Although a somewhat typical looking European style covered market, the combination of the history of the market (with origins dating back to the 18th Century), and the mixing of local and international foods like Mediterranean olives and Asian stalls, made me curious to know more about Irish food and its evolution. This was not what I expected since I had heard from others (mostly those from outside Ireland) that Irish food was dull and uninspiring. But the English Market certainly defied my previously held image of bland and boring foods. Little did I know back in 1999, that not only was County Cork home to some of the last remaining old-style, traditional butchers, it was also a hub for some of the most prolific and innovative food producers, chefs, and purveyors in Ireland. After this encounter at the English Market, I began to see another side to Irish food. It could not be pigeon holed; rather it is evolving and more dynamic than is often thought.



Photo 1: Cork City English Market.

Nevertheless, many people still continue to perceive Irish food as insipid and unsophisticated. Before I first ever came to Ireland, my gnocchi-making grandfather caringly inquired: “What *are* you going to eat over there? Peat moss?!” Of course this did and does still seem rather amusing to me (especially given my discovery of the English Market), and yet despite an international cuisine that is very much available in Ireland, I have failed to find gnocchi anywhere as good and light as my Italian grandfather’s. So maybe there are no emulators of Pap-Pap’s ricotta gnocchi’s but certainly peat moss is reserved to the bogs! Although I have not found a replication of that gnocchi, I am no longer looking for that nostalgic taste in Ireland. Here, I have made new foods and found a new appreciation for Irish

foods. The ingredients are ones that are so indicative of the green grass and unique growing conditions, that like those food producers in West Cork, the simplest and pure ingredients are what make and have become so symbolic of Ireland's food culture. In some ways then, I feel like the West Cork food producers in both my search and creation of food now that I am living here long-term: I am no longer constantly trying to bring "home" to Ireland but am making home with what is already here. For now, West Cork Glenilen butter and Avoca Café's brown bread has been my new comfort food in the absence of Pap-Pap's gnocchi.

I often wonder, had I not wandered unaware into the persuasive stalls of the English Market one Saturday afternoon in Cork city, if I would have found my way into the homes and onto the farms of so many welcoming food producers of West County Cork. It was only after such "run-ins" with Irish food, like the one at the English Market, that I began to see that there was actually something quite special happening in the country which clearly challenged one's usual expectations of food in the British Isles. There was also something beguiling and exciting about "discovering" a previously "unknown" food culture, or at least a food culture I surely had not heard much about outside of the Emerald Isle. It was not long before I began to recognize how strong a region West Cork was for producing food. And I was really rather astounded by the sheer number of cheesemakers, fish smokers, charcuterie makers and pig farmers, organic gardeners, and more that had stemmed from this country that apparently had dreadful food!

Although I left Ireland for a while after my initial studies at University College Cork in 1999, when I returned in 2003 (this time to study in Dublin) and again in the Summer of 2006, I had for some time, harbored the idea to return to the country to rediscover those foods of the English market. Only this time I was curious to learn about the people behind their creation. My food memories from my early days in Ireland proved to be the catalyst for my ongoing interest in not only particular Irish foods, but also their storied pasts and present day evolution.



Photo 2: Gubbeen smoked cheese.



Photo 3: West Cork creamery plaque.



Photo 4: West Cork milk stand.

The Absence of Irish Food Studies: Reminder of the Famine?

I had an outsider/"tourist gaze" when I first came to Ireland but it was just this type of external lens that allowed me to create new and important memories that have shaped my own identity with the country today. Yet sometimes I am surprised by how my Irish food memories from my first visit in 1999 are strikingly different to others. Of course memory is subjective, but perhaps that is why it can be such a profoundly illuminating area of study in the context of food studies. As David Sutton in *Remembrance of Repasts* notes: "[the] ability of food to both generate subjective commentary and encode powerful meanings would seemingly make it ideal to wed to the topic of memory" (2001:6). While there will always be different ways of remembering the past, in the Irish setting it is what one remembers (as well as forgets as Sutton points out) in relation to food that is so interesting to me. In this context, what is missing or absent from food memories can provide a most intriguing commentary on the state of Irish food culture past and present.

Both Sutton and Long discuss how certain aspects of food studies have only recently been developed and explored in the fields of anthropology and folklore. Sutton's work on food and memory was the first of its kind to really examine the "historical *consciousness* ...the understanding of people's subjective perceptions of foods past" (2001:8). When thinking of how the Irish sense of memory about food differs from other cultures, I am reminded of Long's point that foodways can sometimes illuminate a part of history "that consumers do not want to celebrate" (2009:5) by bringing up "forgotten historical forces" (2009:3). Those parts of history that have been eroded by famine and "political and land upheavals" would naturally be unpleasant reminders of food (or lack thereof) in the past (Sexton 2001:98). These theories may help explain why the vibrant food culture I had seen developing in Ireland in my first days at the English Market was not reflected in the course offerings of folklore and cultural studies departments in Ireland. Regina Sexton comments: "Sadly, the study of Irish food has not been given the respect it deserves" (2001:7). Was it perhaps something as basic as the belief that Irish food was not seen to be on the same level as Irish music and oral literature? Were foodways simply ignored because they were, as Sutton says, too "quotidian" or mundane (2001:3)? Was this lack of academic interest in food (except for a few individuals in recent years) because food and food memories formed part of the deep-seated national narrative related to the famine? While there certainly has been a good deal of work done in different interdisciplinary fields on the famine, I am unaware of many references that have attempted to link this "memory" of famine with a possible (unconscious or not) reason for the perceivable absence of critical work in Irish food studies that I see today. Yet food is now so much a part of Irish popular culture and because of this, it has begun to fair better. But why does it have to be viewed through only a popular culture lens? Are the media, Irish celebrity chefs, and cookbook writers and bloggers the only ones who can get excited about Irish food? Yes, Irish folklorists and historians have contributed some contemporary research on the topic (such as Regina Sexton, Patricia Lysaght, and Kevin Danaher) but I feel there is not much ethnographic work that examines the recent change in food culture. Yet on the topic of Irish tradition music, one finds a wealth of research, which has long garnered the attention of scholars. And in popular culture, one can now regularly see how "old" style Irish music has been made "cool" again, as evidenced in the

explosion of young Irish traditional musicians and dancers. But in the same way, does not the “old” (and older generation for that matter) food traditions inform the new generation of Irish food producers? I know that like the raw (food) materials of the rich Irish landscape that the producers of West Cork saw as their garden of opportunity, there is still abundant and fruitful (food) ethnography material to be discovered among the now diverse food communities of Ireland.

Another theory for the absence of documented Irish food experiences and memories could be that Irish food has always been compared to its European neighbors. When compared to other European countries like France or Italy which often present and define themselves through their foodways, Ireland naturally does not appear on par with such stereotypically foodcentric nations. In fact, some still question whether Ireland even has an “established” food culture. But it may be partly through comparisons with other cuisines that a sense of national pride arose in Irish foodways. If food was not often part of insiders’ definitions of Irish identity, then was the discovery of Irish food culture by outsiders like myself and those in West Cork a significant and necessary means of reaffirming and validating the existence of an Irish food culture for those on the *inside*?

Irish Food Memories: Forgetting? the Past; New Meaning in the Everyday

When David Sutton talks about everyday ritual in regards to food practices on the Greek Island of Kalymnos, his descriptions of food exchanges as expressions of hospitality and generosity could apply to the warmth I experienced from West Cork food producers I spoke with. While hospitality seems to be an intrinsic part of Irish culture in general, when it comes to food practices, it often appears to me that the ritual of a meal is something more private, reserved for sharing with family members rather than with outsiders. My personal experience differs from what Sutton describes in Greece. His discussions with the local islanders with whom he was not initially familiar, and the inseparable role that food and hospitality seemed to play during his visits, all reiterate the focal point he drives home in his work: the path to remembering so many aspects of one’s personal (and collective) history is so often *through* food. For those from Kalymnos, this process is also tied up with self-identity, national and regional identity. Having a reputation for being hospitable and generous in relation to food was something that many of the local islanders Sutton worked with were concerned with. This differs from the Irish notion of hospitality in general. While one might include hospitality in their “list” of important “Irish” identity markers/stereotypes, a reputation for hospitality is not embodied in the food culture. Yet it is through the everyday exchange of a meal that Sutton partook in and experienced on Kalymnos that he was able to better grasp the nature and definition of ritual. The nature of folklore itself can be described as the ‘ritual in the everyday’; a “meaningful, or poetic aspect of all experience,” and it is through such a food experience that we are able to grasp what role memory may play in a particular group (Sutton 2001:20). Likewise, Sutton suggests the term “prospective memory,” the “linking of past, present, and future” is perhaps a more interlinked way of remembering events and practices, which becomes especially evident when ritual practices become a part of everyday life (Sutton 2001:29).

If “ritual provides a context for us to begin consideration of the way food and memory are tied up together” (Sutton 2001:29), then what “rituals” are we to look at in the Irish food context? How have the Irish remembered their food experiences? Do their contemporary rituals reflect a new sense of food culture rather than one of the past? Was it perhaps because the past was not always one of food abundance that some have chosen to forget and instead create new food memories? Or can the past be remembered as a means to recreating what was: the traditional foodstuffs and more simple agricultural production of an Ireland from time past? I see a blending and more nuanced perspective of the historical past and present in Irish food culture today. And it is in this fresh outlook of regional food producers that I have seen a renewal of ritual in the everyday. The seemingly simple practice of cheesemaking in Ireland has become an act and symbol for modern day Irish food--one that the country is identified with internationally and one I believe people are finally proud of. Furthermore, are some of these revitalised Irish food practices or rituals a type of beacon towards more “positive” food-identity building times to come? Or, perhaps because there was no established regional food production or foundation to build upon in West Cork, a new type of food culture was created? As I mentioned earlier, until around the 1970s, no one was really making traditional foods like cheese in West Cork let alone Ireland, at least not for the consumer and mass market. People like Gianna and Jeffa are able to form a “link with [the] past” (Sutton 2001:29) through the production of cheese. They reintroduce to the Irish people and the culinary tourist (sometimes that is the same person) a historical and cultural taste of the past. In this way, the new cheeses created by these outside, passionate people represent a new page in Irish food history which has since helped to foster a new sense of pride for Irish food. As Long asserts: “Identity in the present emerges out of identities of the past and often hides or reinterprets that past. Food is a common medium through which these processes occur and can be examined” (2009:3). Processes like culinary tourism play a role in not only creating opportunities for one to experience an Irish food event in a regional setting, they also present a place for new and meaningful experience through cultural exchange.

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