



Foodie Destinations 2019 - Eligibility Criteria/Application Guidelines

To be considered for the 'Foodie Destination of the Year' award, applicants must consider the following criteria before applying:

- **'Destination'** refers to a town, village, region or city. The Restaurants Association of Ireland along with their independent judges will determine if exceptions can be made or if an applicant cannot qualify as a destination – for example Dublin as a whole city could not be considered as there are so many different areas within which could qualify. The Burren - although considered a large region - does qualify because they work together to market themselves as a singular food destination. Their small towns and villages are spread out over the sparse landscape but offer the same values when it comes to food tourism and use of the land.
- The destination should offer a **unique visitor experience** based on local food culture. The purpose of this project is to highlight and encourage **food tourism** initiatives across the country. The judges will look for evidence of an established food **culture/identity** of the destination. They will assess how the destination collaboratively utilises this identity and promotes it. There are many ways to do this - either through special dishes in restaurants that make use of local/unique ingredients or a food festival/food trail. See Fáilte Ireland's Food Story Toolkit for useful tips and guidance: <http://www.failteireland.ie/Supports/Food-Tourism-in-Ireland/Telling-Ireland-s-food-story.aspx>
- 'Town' refers to both towns and villages. Tourism or vacationing should be a primary component of the local culture and economy. These towns offer a stand-alone, unique food and tourism visitor experience which does not expand out to the surrounding areas.
- A **minimum of three groups/organisations/businesses** are required to submit one application together. It is important that a collaborative effort is made from a variety of representatives of the destination. An application should not solely represent the efforts/views/interests of just one party, business or individual. Applicants can include anyone from business owners to county councillors, festival organisers, market stall holders, community groups etc.
- **Education** is an important element in a winning Foodie Destination. Judges will be looking at what resources are available in the destination for training in the cookery, hospitality and tourism sectors. Educating the community on healthy eating and sustainability is also important.
- **Support of the local economy and employment** will also be considered. For example, restaurants should show evidence of using local produce. Instead of seeking chefs from anywhere in Ireland, restaurateurs should look first to their own destination for recruitment opportunities and have connections with the hospitality schools.

- **Festivals and Events** – there must be evidence of a calendar of events in the area aimed at promoting local food and drink. Food festivals, gourmet trails, farmers markets and special dining experiences are some traditional events that are typically seen in a Foodie Destination
- There must be plans in place to **continue to support and develop future food culture** in the destination. Plans for future growth and investment into the local food/hospitality industry will be assessed by the judges

PLEASE NOTE last year's winners (2018) are NOT eligible to apply again this year (2019), but can submit an application next year.

If you have any queries about whether or not your destination is eligible, please do not hesitate to contact the RAI on 01 677 9901 or email events@rai.ie