



Culinary Tourism Alliance

FOOD TOURISM

ASSESSMENT

RESEARCH METHODS:

- Desktop research + key document review (May 2019)
- Food Industry Survey (June 2019) - 58 respondents
- Key Informant Interviews (June + July 2019) - 15 interviews
- In-market Research (July 2019)

In 2019, the Culinary Tourism Alliance conducted a Food Tourism Assessment of the area around Letchworth State Park (the Genesee Valley) to evaluate the current state of food tourism in the region along with associated challenges and opportunities for food tourism development. The report presents an overview of the food tourism landscape and key findings that emerged through the community-based research process. The assessment is intended to provide municipal and county leaders with data and insights to support strategic decision-making and market improvements to boost the region's potential as a heritage tourism destination.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Absence of a shared regional destination identity
- Opportunities for food tourism were not well understood; food is not yet a central part of the region's value proposition as a destination
- A need to strengthen storytelling and visibility for local food offerings
- A need to strengthen "ambassadorship" in the region; businesses, in general, did not know how to refer people on to other places
- Opportunities for more cooperative marketing between Letchworth State Park and the surrounding gateway communities



FOOD TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

- Growing visitor demand for locally-sourced food and cuisine.
- Developing a shared narrative for Genesee Valley history, heritage, and foodways.
- Increasing collaborative marketing and regional partnerships.
- Closing the gap in storytelling.

KEY CHALLENGES

- **Changing mindsets that determine local demand:** 'local' is not yet a priority for the year-round resident market. When communities aren't ambassadors of their shared foodways, it is difficult for food tourism businesses to ascribe intangible cultural value to the local food and drink they want to share with visitors.
- **Managing seasonality:** offering a consistently local menu at an accessible price range for local consumers considering the short tourism season. This issue is compounded by the fact that many local farms are limited in their supply and have little room to service increased demand.

NEXT STEPS...

- Continued implementation of the regions's central marketing platform and brand identity, ExploreGeneseeValley.com
- Training and skills development in areas like photography, storytelling, digital marketing, etc.
- Information and guidance for food and beverage producers, i.e. certifications, licensing, zoning and coding laws, and funding.

UNIQUE SELLING POINTS:

Butter Meat Co.
Deer Run Winery
East Hill Creamery
Ember Woodfire Grill
Farmer's Creekside
Tavern and Inn
Mortalis Brewing
OSB Cider
Ration Wine Bar
Rising Storm Brewery
The Abbey of the
Genesee
The Hole in the Wall
Restaurant
The Silver Lake
Brewing Project
The Yard of Ale



For a copy of the full assessment please contact info@letchworthgatewayvillages.org