

# FOOD IS HIGHLY IMPORTANT FOR TOUR PARTICIPANTS



Failure to specialize in the expanding niche of food tourism is making travel sellers miss lucrative opportunities according to Harold Partain, Dallas based Epicopia Culinary Journey's founder.

He noted that travel agents should keep up with what is happening in the food tourism industry. Today, consumers have become more knowledgeable than the consultants hence making it important for the agents to be informed more about the industry and opportunities.

## Adding Food Component

Adding wine and food in the tour itineraries is amongst the logical ways in which agents can get into food tourism according to Partain's advice. This is mainly attributed to the fact that **food is universal and hence agents who specialize in travel to areas such as South Asia and India can benefit by incorporating food in their tours.**

Partain knows this very well because he has been a travel agent for forty five years. He noted that groups of tourists regarded food highly during their travel. He further noted that in nine times out of ten, the groups remembered the food and hence saw it as a great opportunity to combine music and art with food.

## Getting Educated

Partain reckons that **education is vital and one of the ideal places to start is the certification program by World Food Travel Association.** This will provide the agents with knowledge such as the existence of the thirteen major professionals who are involved in a culinary tourism product. He also noted that the main problem with majority of the small group tours is that almost all restaurants offer the same thing. This makes it important for the agents to know what the special foods served by the restaurants are, what the travelers read and what they watch. It is also important to collaborate with wine shops, chefs and other people involved with local hotels.

## Partnering with Tour Operators

Partain also advises that it is paramount to create a relationship with tour operators who are knowledgeable. This is because there are various tour operators who know a lot of important things about food tourism. He however says that it is important to get good operators who do not just claim to have the relevant knowledge.

## Having Passion

Partain terms passion as one of the most important part of food tourism besides partnership and education. This is because passion is what drives the agents to convince their customers and be able to apply food tourism effectively.

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