

# Local food and tourism in Iceland

## What – why – how ?



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# An introduction – profile



- Laufey Haraldsdóttir
  - Lecturer/Assistant Professor at the Rural Tourism Department, Holar University College
  - Background: public health, food safety, rural tourism, folkloristic
  - Food and tourism main academic area today
    - Lecturing
    - Developing projects
    - Research



# Holar University College (HUC)

- Historical, cultural, and ecclesiastical site
- A place of learning through the ages
- University College since 2007
- Present time:
  - Centre for education and research in three highly specialised fields; equine science, aqua-culture and aquatic biology, and tourism studies



Fig. Broddi



# Iceland – Capitalizing on Nature

- Promoted as tourism destination since mid twentieth century
- In recent years increased emphasis on image-making through marketing exercises
  - Example:
    - Iceland naturally in the United States
      - Nature with different actors (such as food products) taking part to enact the image
    - Various food tourism projects around the country
      - Emphasising local products and knowledge
      - Mixture of tradition and innovation to make a place narratives
    - Food and Fun project, New Nordic Food and more....  
(Haraldsdóttir and Gunnarsdóttir, 2013)

# Why food and tourism

- New patterns of tourism
  - A move from large-scale packaging of standardised leisure
- Consumers (tourists) actively engaged in new forms of tourism experience – beyond the visual engagement
- Food tourism characterises these new tourism experiences

(Sally Everett, 2008:338-340)

# Why local food and tourism?

- Growing interest in culinary products and traditions
  - Food more important factor in influencing tourists' motivations for travelling
- Regional products and dishes feature as unique sales argument in destination branding
  - Emblematic expression of a place
  - Traditional meals `symbolic value'; expression on local culture

(Gyimóthy and Mykletun, 2009:260)

# Local food as part of the 'alternative food network'

- Connected to sustainable tourism and the appeal to visitor's desire for authenticity
- Symbolises the place and culture of a destination

(Rebecca Sims, 2009:321)

- By buying local we address the energy question

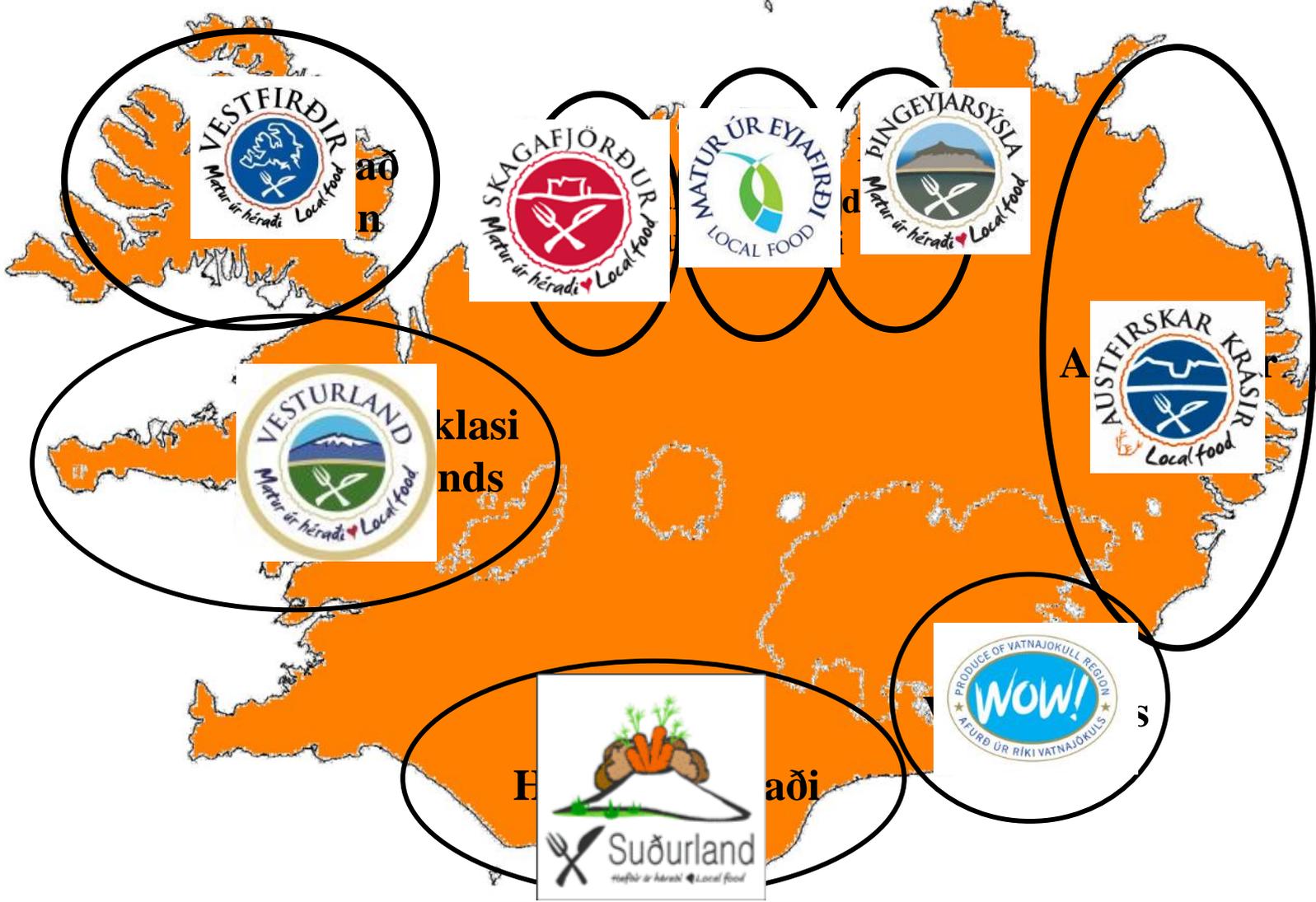
(Jeff Pratt, 2007:288)

# Food and tourism in Iceland

- Rapid development since the turn of the century
- Regions
  - Various food tourism projects since 2004
- The country
  - Nature tourist destination
  - -> The marriage of food and nature
- The Nordic Countries
  - A joint program *New Nordic Food*
- Individuals
  - Tourism entrepreneurs
  - Small scale production
  - Design



# Local/Regional projects



# Education is about

- Economic issues and benefits for the destination and entrepreneurs
  - While the relationship between food and tourism is at first glance obvious, in productive terms the relationship needs to be integrated into a strategy for local economic development that seeks to maximize economic and social leverage between producers and the tourism industry  
(Hall, Mitchell, and Sharples, 2003:28)
- Knowing the customer
  - Understanding tourists needs and wants in terms of food consumption is of paramount importance to hospitality businesses  
(Mak, Lumbers, Eves and Chang, 2012:935)

# Education is about

- Culinary innovation and development
  - Identity, image making and creation of stories  
(Byrkjeflot, S.Pedersen and Svejnova, 2013: )
- Supply chain
  - The linkage of producers and distributors in the context of the creation of a commodity (Smith and Xiao, 2008:291)
- Visibility, performance and `embodied' experience
  - Food tourism should be regarded as an embodied form of tourism, capable of providing an embodied experience of place, perhaps more powerful than many other commodities (Sally Everett, 2008:341)

# Developing a **Rural Culinary Tourism Product:** Considerations and Resources for Success

- .....and
  - Multiple players
  - Government involvement
  - Cooperation and trust
  - Champion (Leadership)
  - Long-Term Approach
  - Funding

(Murray and Haraldsdottir, 2004)

# Future development and research in Iceland

- The demand
  - Profiling our guests better
    - Needs and desires regarding food and drink
- The supply
  - Tourism entrepreneurs
    - What, how, why?
    - Context/environment, motivations, visions, requirements, methods.....
  - Research under construction 😊

Thank you.....



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