



Taste Durham showcases and celebrates the county's food and drink and encourages people who live here, and those who are visiting, to sample the best food and drink on offer.

Local food and produce is sought out by more and more people who are looking for an authentic experience and who care where their food comes from.

What attracts food tourists?

- The vibrancy of farmers markets
- The emergence of food festivals across the country
- Quality of local produce
- Number of eating out venues



The food and drink sector is worth

£503m

(36% of total spend) to Durham's visitor economy and employs

5,136 people

(37% of total employment).

(STEAM results 2024)

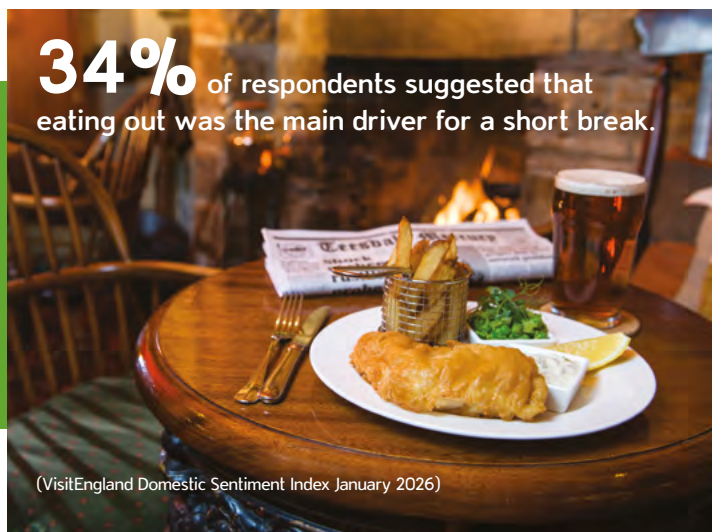


36% people who visit Durham define eating out as being a key activity on their visit.

(County visitor survey 2025)

34% of respondents suggested that eating out was the main driver for a short break.

(VisitEngland Domestic Sentiment Index January 2026)

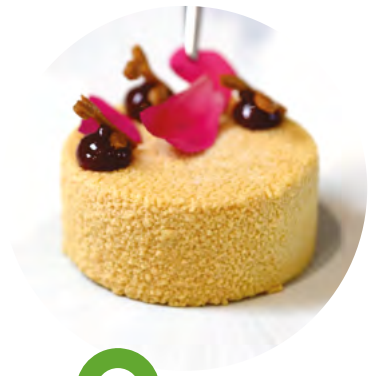


Why local produce matters

Local produce can help to make a destination distinctive from other areas and can be a key driver for a visit.

Using local produce

1. Produce a **local sourcing policy** and stick to it, for example, “*we source at least 70% of our fresh ingredients from producers within 50 miles.*”
2. Work with **local producers** – visit when possible, pay promptly (cash flow matters to small producers) and be flexible on size, shape, and variety.
3. **Seasonality** – source core items year-round (stable ingredients) alongside seasonal rotating items and ‘market specials’ based on availability.
4. Think about **utilising excess produce** using method such as pickling, fermenting, freezing and dehydrating. This also helps to cut down on food waste.



Storytelling

Use local produce to tell a story for example producer names (with permission), origin stories, imagery and highlight ingredients. Try using menu footnotes, chalkboards, social media and staff conversations.



Marketing

- Collaborate with producers on events
- Host producer dinners or tastings
- Cross-promote on social media
- Feature suppliers on your website



Measuring the impact

Track:

- % spend with local suppliers
- Number of local partners
- Seasonal menu changes
- Waste reduction over time

Did you know...



Durham has a long history of producing quality local produce. In the 18th Century Durham City was the birthplace of English mustard, first ground at a mill in Saddler Street.

England's oldest agricultural show was first held in Wolsingham in the Durham Dales in 1763.