

Food Tourism Development Strategies for Southwest Indian Country

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Presentation Outline

- Background situation: Southwest Indian reservations
- What is food tourism?
- What does food tourism offer small growers and food producers?
- Food tourism as an economic development strategy
- Why might food tourism be a good fit for Southwest Indian reservations?
- Project objectives
- Project research activities
- Proposed project outcomes/impacts

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Background Situation: Southwest Indian Reservations

- Southwest Indian reservations rich in natural resources
 - Navajo, Hopi, Ute, Zuni, & CRIT
- Very high poverty rates among tribal residents
 - 27% below poverty level on average
 - Navajo nation 43% below poverty
 - Average income of \$7K annually
 - 56% high school diploma, 7% college degree
- Agriculture, mining, tourism primary economic drivers
- Agriculture and livestock a core foundation of native American culture
- Vulnerable population to climate change impacts

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Agricultural Risk & Climate Change

- Close cultural and economic ties to natural resources, geographic remoteness, and economic challenges have led some to characterize American Indian reservations as some of the most vulnerable populations to climate change impacts (National Climate Assessments, U.S. Global Climate Change Research Program, 2014).
- Recurring challenges facing producers across the Navajo Nation (Patrick, 2013) include...
 - Limited farming opportunities and low crop yields due to water shortages stemming from enduring droughts and inadequate water storage and distribution infrastructure
 - Soil erosion and poor soil quality due to open ranges, lack of fencing, overgrazing and depleted organic material
 - Lack of knowledge of modern crop production and risk management practices, limited access to equipment and technical assistance, and knowledge of market and sales opportunities
 - Livestock (cattle, sheep, and goat) production, and market and sales opportunities are limited by the poor quality animals

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What is Food Tourism?

- Tourism focused on exploratory eating or drinking, experiencing unfamiliar items or participating in new customs to encounter, learn, or understand new places and cultures
- Tourists seek food experiences based on local identity and culture, search for “authenticity”
- Tourists travel to destinations that have established a reputation as a place to try/experiment with unique quality local products
- Common activities: wine and ale trails, winery/brewery visits, food souvenirs, farm stays, corn mazes, food festivals, farmers’ market and local-sourcing restaurants, cooking schools....

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Food Tourism Activities

Agritourism	Farm stays	Farm-based Activities (hay rides, corn mazes)	Pick-your-own produce	Farm stands	Fishing/Hunting
Buildings/structures	Food processing facilities	Wineries/Breweries	Farmers' markets	Food stores	Food-related museums
Consumer shows/Festivals	Food and drink shows	Cooking Demonstrations	Food festivals	Beer and wine festivals	Harvest festival
Consumption	Dining at restaurants	Picnics utilizing locally-grown products	Purchasing retail food/beverages	Tasting local recipes	Food-based souvenir purchases
Touring	Wine regions/routes	Agricultural regions	City food districts	Food routes	Gourmet trails
Land uses	Farms	Orchards	Vineyards	Urban restaurant districts	
Organizational	Restaurant classification or certification systems	Food/wine classification systems (organic, local)	Associations (e.g. Slow Food)		
Educational	Cooking schools	Wine tasting	Visiting wineries	Food and beverage magazines	

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Food Tourists

- Food/drink and related choices motivated by...
 - Cultural experience
 - Interpersonal relations
 - Excitement
 - Sensory appeal
 - Health concerns (Lee, 2012)
- Food tourists are considered cultural tourists
 - Educated consumerism
 - Open to new experiences
 - Desire for lifelong learning
 - Independent travelers
 - High expectations (Croce and Perry, 2010)

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Growth in Food Tourism

- Food is one of the major tourism activities
 - 30-40% of tourism expenditures are on food/drink
 - Tourists tend to be less sensitive to food prices
 - Food is considered a “vital” component in the quality of a tourism experience
- The National Restaurant Association's 2013 Restaurant Industry Forecast reported that 70% of consumers were more likely to visit a restaurant offering locally sourced items
- The National Restaurant Association's 2014 “Top Ten Trends across the Nation,” included locally sourced meats/seafood and locally grown produce as the top 2 trends
- The US travel Association reports that 27 million travelers, or 17% of American leisure travelers, engaged in culinary or wine-related activities while traveling within a three-year period

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Why Food Tourism for Small Growers/Producers?

- Diversification into new enterprises/products
- Additional market for current products
- Reduced transportation/marketing costs
- Year-round sales (additional sales)
- Outlet for value-added products
- Income/employment for family members
- Full employment of existing farm/ranch resources
- Interaction and educational opportunities with customers
- Take advantage of existing tourism market
- Take advantage of governmental programs/tax incentives

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Food Tourism & Economic Development

- Increases economic opportunity for local farmers and food providers near tourism destinations
- Enhances the visitor experience in relation to the consumption of local food products, recipes, and cultural immersion
- Strengthens a region's identity and sustains cultural heritage
- Supports a region's economic and socio-cultural foundation

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Food Tourism Potential in Southwest Indian Country

- Close proximity to 12+ national parks , monuments, tribal parks, and historic sites
 - 600,000 visitors annually
 - \$112.8 million in spending
 - 1788 jobs supported
- Navajo Nation alone has 3 million visitors annually
- Unique tribal goods, foods, and cultural traditions are ideal for the needs of the food tourism market
- Adding value to agricultural goods a priority among tribes

Navajo Economic Development Plan states “Tourism development stands a very good chance of reducing unemployment here. People from all around the world already come to this region. The Nation just has to do a better job of capturing the tourist dollars”

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Project Objectives

- Investigate the tourism destination image of Southwest Indian Country and traveler motivations and needs related to food and agritourism
- Examine the production, distribution and marketing needs of tribal agricultural producers and small food processors interested in entering agricultural and food tourism
- Evaluate various models for incorporating ag/food tourism into the marketing portfolio of agricultural and food processing operations in Southwest Indian Country
- Disseminate study results and information to agricultural producers, food processors, tourism enterprises, and policy makers in Southwest Indian County

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Project Research Activities

1. Investigate the tourism destination image of Southwest Indian Country and traveler motivations and needs related to food and

Activities	Methods
Complete literature review of tourism studies in the targeted region	Consult literature from tourism, economics, and geography journals
Collect data on current tourism/visitor statistics for the targeted region	Contact tribal and state offices of tourism for data
Assess visitor demographics, interests, and needs related to food tourism and agritourism, define target visitor types for food and agritourism marketing efforts	Conduct in-person tourist surveys on and adjacent to reservations to ensure appropriate sample. Analyze data using econometric methods such as differences in mean, cluster analysis, and willingness to purchase.

2. Examine the production, distribution and marketing needs of tribal agricultural producers and small food processors

Activities	Methods
Compile information related to current agricultural production and agritourism operations on reservations	Consult US Census, Agriculture Census, and Native American Census documents
Compile information on current food processors and facilities on reservations	Consult reservation directories and websites
Assess current marketing outlets used and products provided, as well as interest in expanding ag/food tourism activities Assess potential benefits and hurdles associated with producer adoption of new products and marketing outlets Assess educational and technical assistance needs	Conduct in-person surveys of agricultural producers and food processors on and adjacent to reservations to ensure appropriate sample. Analyze data using common statistical methods.

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Project Research Activities

3. Evaluate various models for incorporating ag/food tourism into the marketing portfolio of agricultural and food processing operators

Activities	Methods
Conduct literature review of producer adoption needs and techniques	Consult literature in economics and sociology journals
Evaluate regulatory environment including state and reservation requirements related to small food processing, food distribution, and agritourism operations	Consult state and reservation land use codes, Departments of Agriculture, and Health Departments
Compile information on current tourism operators and supply chains operating on or adjacent to reservations	Consult reservation directories and websites
Evaluate the potential for creating partnerships and supply chain arrangements with current and new tourism operators	Conduct tourism operator focus groups. Analyze data using qualitative methods include theme designation.

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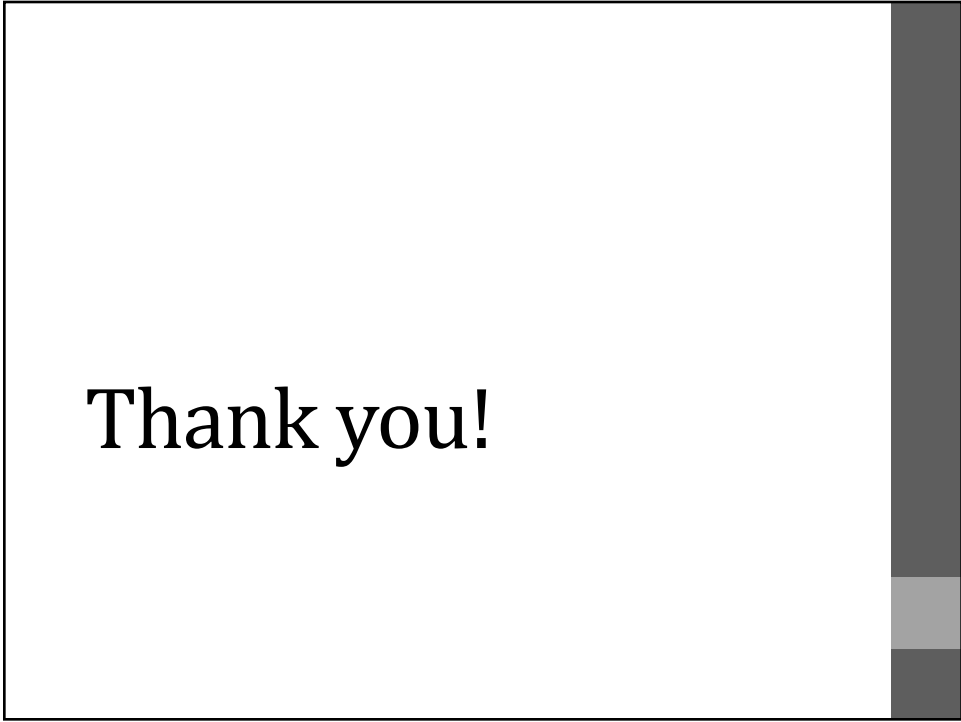
Proposed Project Outcomes/Impacts

Knowledge	Actions	Conditions
Occurs when there is a change in knowledge and/or attitude: - Increase producer understanding of tourist preferences for food tourism & agritourism - Increase producer knowledge of tourism outlets & distribution options - Increase producer knowledge of cottage food production & distribution - Increase producer awareness of cultural foods & production methods - Increase producer ability to evaluate the economic feasibility of food and agritourism products/enterprises - Increase producer ability to diversify & adapt to market & climate changes	Occur when there is a change in behavior or the participants act upon what they have learned: - Tribal producers investigate diversification opportunities - Tribal agriculture & food producers create new products or services for tourists/visitors - Tribal communities initiate tourism planning & partnership development - Establishment of tourism & food/agritourism partnerships & supply chains - Ongoing education, information sharing, & activities involving project partners & USDA agencies to enhance project impacts	Occur when an economic, environmental, or social conditions are improved due to actions taken by the participant as a result of their participation: - Sustainable tribal agricultural operations - Improved tribal economic development & business opportunities - Improved partnerships with tribal & non-tribal tourism/food operations - Improved social, environmental, & economic conditions on the reservations - Sustained tribal traditions & culture - Enhanced partnerships with 1994 and 1862 college, Extension, & USDA agencies - Resilient & thriving tribal communities

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Questions,
Comments, or
Suggestions?

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