

## Belfast Food Tourism Project

### Background

The Food Tourism Project that was supported by the NI Regional Food Programme administered by DARD and part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland and administered by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board delivered a portfolio of Food Tourism products.

The aim of the Food Tourism Project which included events, promotions and trails was to showcase the food tourism offer and present our agri-food sector with a platform to re-engage with customers and to attract more visitors to the city - acting as an economic driver for the Belfast and NI economy. The events, food trails, and online communication will highlight the importance of our regional food offering and emphasise the positive results achieved by increasing consumption including:

- Health Benefits for individuals
- Quality of life
- Economic benefits for the entire country
- Tourism benefits

A breakdown of the various elements of the project and successes is outlined below:

### 1. The Great Belfast Food Week 24 – 27 March 2010

The 'Great Belfast Food Week' – Wednesday 24 to Saturday 27 March –promoted all that is good about local food, its producers and those who bring it to our tables.

Top local chefs Paul Rankin, Nick Price and Jason More were joined by celebrity chefs James Martin and Gino D'Acampo, as well as broadcaster Sheila Dillon. These high profile food experts spent four days celebrating Northern Ireland's unique food culture and history, as well as the benefits of supporting the local food industry.

Through showcasing the best of our local produce, the 'Great Belfast Food Week' offered local food producers and chefs the opportunity to demonstrate the quality and exquisite nature of Northern Ireland's food and showcase our local culinary talent.

The 'Great Belfast Food Week' included a variety of events and demonstrations at key locations in and around Belfast city, including:

Event	Date	Venue	Audience	Profile
'Belfast Kitchen' with James Martin, Paul Rankin, Nick Price and Jason More	24 March 2010	Ulster Museum	68	General public Industry
Celebrity Cooking demo Gino D'Acampo and Paul Rankin	25 March 2010	Connswater Shopping Centre Victoria Centre	Approx 1,000	General public
Gino D'Acampo walk around meeting traders and the public at St Georges	26 March 2010	St Georges Market	Approx 4,000	Traders/general public
Four course lunch cooked by Gino D'Acampo using fresh ingredients sourced directly from St George's	26 March 2010	St George's Bar and Grill	70	General public

Event	Date	Venue	Audience	Profile
Market, and also see his twist on the 'Great Belfast Menu'				
Slow Food Movement lecture with Nick Price and Sheila Dillon, presenter of Radio 4's 'Good Food Programme'	26 March 2010	Grand Opera House	50	Producers, chefs, stakeholders
Launch of Belfast Bred walking trail with Sheila Dillon	27 March 2010	City Centre	15	Key stakeholders
Belfast Chocolate Festival with Sheila Dillon discussion	27 March 2010	St George's Market	6000	Public

**Total Audience: 11,230**

Belfast City Council has been recognised for its leadership role in the delivery of **The Great Belfast Food Week** and it was publicly supported by both the Minister for Agriculture & Rural Development and Minister for Enterprise. Investment in the project has generated sponsorship and in-kind support through key stakeholders and project partners including participating shopping centres, industry partners Good Food NI, BMI, Malmaison Hotel, the Merchant Hotel and the Pork & Bacon Forum.

The Great Belfast Food Week was launched two weeks before hand and a high PR and Marketing campaign included:

- o Event leaflets
- o E-Zine
- o Launch press release and photography
- o Broadcast Interviews/features
- o Competitions
- o Social/online media
- o Press editorial features
- o Social photography at the events

PR to promote the campaign achieved the following results:

Type of coverage	No of pieces	Readership/Listenership	Advertising Equivalent
Editorial Coverage	44	4,571,098	£131,538.97
Editorial Broadcast	9	14,560,000	£4,310.00
Online	21	N/A	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>4,585,658</b>	<b>£135,848.97</b>



**Figure 2 Great Belfast Food Week Saturday Kitchen**  
Jason More, Coco,  
Cllr William Humphrey BCC,  
Pauline Rooney DARD, Paul Rankin,



**Figure 1 Great Belfast Food Week Saturday Kitchen**  
Paul Rankin, Cllr William Humphrey, James Martin, Nick Pri

Nick Price

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today!

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Belfast  
delicious

## The Great Belfast Food Week



**Wednesday 24 – Saturday 27 March 2010**

The Great Belfast Food Week is a four day food festival which will celebrate and showcase the best of Northern Ireland food produce. Run by Belfast City Council and supported by DARD's Regional Food Programme, the event will be headlined by some of the best known national chefs - Saturday Kitchen star James Martin, King of the Jungle, Gino D Acampo and The Good Food Programme's host Sheila Dillon as well as local food heroes Paul Rankin and Nick Price.

The event is aimed at raising awareness of Northern Ireland's unique food culture and history and will feature local food producers with demonstrations and opportunities for the hospitality trade and public to sample top notch cuisine prepared by top notch chefs.



**Wednesday 24 March 2010**

**Belfast Kitchen with James Martin, Nick Price, Paul Rankin and Jason More**  
Celebrating our local produce with Nick Price.  
Belfast Dishes prepared by Paul Rankin and Jason More with James Martin

Ulster Museum – 9.30am to 12.00 noon  
Tickets £20 pp – Available from Belfast Welcome Centre



**Thursday 25 March 2010**

**Gino Cooks the Great Belfast Menu assisted by Paul Rankin and local chefs**  
Conswater Shopping Centre – 12.30pm to 1.30pm  
Various City Centre venues from 3.00pm  
No ticket required.

**Gino D Acampo – signing his latest cookbook**  
Waterstones, Fountain St, Belfast – 5.00pm to 6.00pm



**Friday 26 March 2010**

**Gino Cooks Lunch at St George's Market**  
St George's Bar and Grill – 11.30am to 1.00pm  
A chance to sample a delicious four course lunch  
using fresh ingredients sourced directly from St George's Market.  
Tickets £35 pp – Available at St George's Bar and Grill  
Tel: +44(0)28 9024 0014



**Sheila Dillon with Nick Price – a presentation on The Slow Food Movement**  
Baby Grand, Grand Opera House, Gt. Victoria St, Belfast – 2.30pm to 5.00pm  
Tickets £10 pp – Available from Belfast Welcome Centre



**Saturday 27 March 2010**

**Belfast Food Trail with Sheila Dillon**  
Belfast Bred: A dramatic tour of the city's cuisine from past to present.

Sample the delights of Belfast food and discover the city's fascinating culinary history in the company of Barney, a chef from RMS Titanic – and Radio 4's Sheila Dillon. Departs from Sawyer's Delicatessen, Fountain Street 10am, finishes St George's Market 12 noon.  
Tickets £15 pp – Available from Belfast Welcome Centre

**St George's Chocolate Festival with Sheila Dillon**  
St George's Market 12pm – 3.00pm  
For further information go to [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/lovefood](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/lovefood)

## 2. New online celebration of food - [www.gotobelfast.com/greatbelfastfood](http://www.gotobelfast.com/greatbelfastfood)

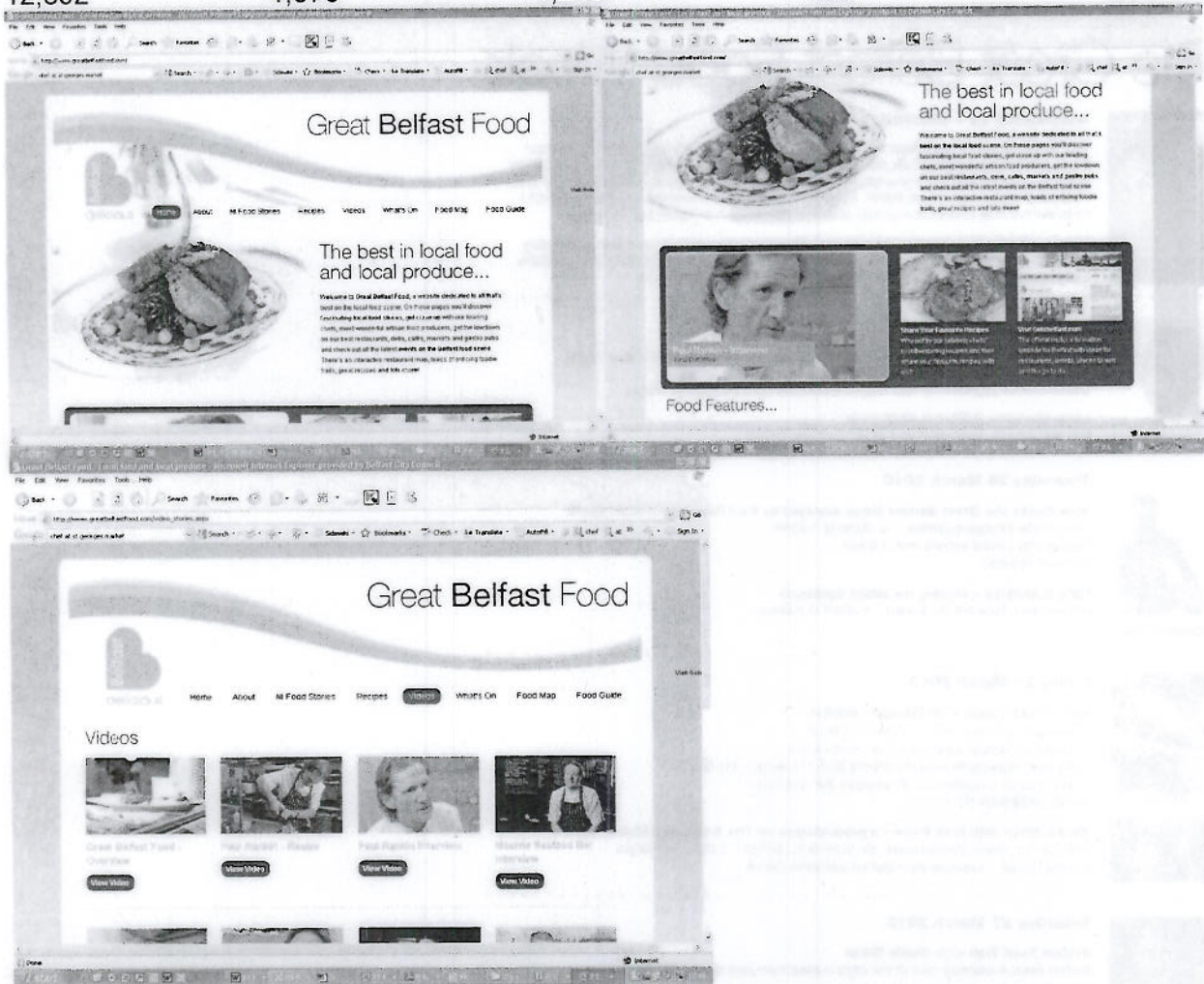
Working in partnership with BVCB, BCC developed an online platform to communicate our key Belfast Food stories.

The site launched during **The Great Belfast Food Week 2010** created a lasting legacy of the achievements of the week. This innovative section includes food recipes, events, suggested itineraries and food tours, an interactive google map; it also profiles local chefs and producers through engaging copy, imagery and video footage which can be shared on social networking sites. BVCB will continue to add to the site to ensure it remains fresh and up-to-date.

Statistics to date on visits to the site are listed below:

Please see stats below for the Great Belfast food site, from 7<sup>th</sup> April-30<sup>th</sup> April:

PAGEVIEWS	PAGE VISITS	UNIQUE VISITORS	AVG. TIME ON SITE
12,892	1,576	1,243	4:22



### 3. Launch of “Belfast Bred Dramatised Walking Tour”



**Belfast Bred** is an animated and dramatised food tour developed in partnership with Kabosh Theatre Company and participating food venues. It is open to 15 participants with tickets priced at £15 per person and box office administered by the Belfast Welcome Centre.

The tour was officially launched during The Great Belfast Food Week 2010 when the highly respected food journalist Sheila Dillon was able to experience it; she was very impressed saying that “It is a wonderful tour which transforms your perception of Belfast”. The pilot schedule of 17 tours has been running every Friday and Saturday since the 16 April and has been extremely popular with all tours selling out extremely quickly, and many dates being over-subscribed.

The format of the tour involves a professional actor whose character is a past chef from the Titanic who takes the participants on a mission to recreate the famous ship’s launch menu. Participants on the two and a half hour journey visits key food venues starting at Sawers Deli, College Street and ending at St George’s Market. At each venue they meet the proprietor who talks to the group about their business, its history and the local produce they sell as well as serving samples some of the key foods unique to Northern Ireland.

The tour was developed with the core values of the Belfast Brand at its heart. The innovation of the tour ensures that participants experience and witness:

- A dynamic city with a big personality between the mountains and the sea
- A city proud of its heritage... alive with possibilities and open to change ... vibrant, energetic and exciting
- The people of Belfast provide a welcome which is not just warm, but genuine and generous, inviting anyone and everyone to join in
- Belfast provides a vivid and memorable experience with new things to discover every time you visit

In terms of venue participation the private sector has given approximately an hour of their time every week to prepare and welcome participants each Friday and Saturday, and also sponsored samples of food– representing significant investment into the project. The venues have witnessed a return of investment in terms of the PR and marketing exposure they are receiving to a captive audience and on a more tangible level have reported increased sales and people returning to use return discount vouchers, Belfast Bred has attracted significant media coverage and has been enjoyed by some key influencers from Northern Ireland and across the world.

Feedback to date has been extremely positive and has received many enquiries from people who would like to book future tours if the pilot run can be extended.

#### TOUR OUTPUTS

Number of Participants	Income
267	£3,195.00

#### Some feedback detailed below:

Of the participants who returned forms to date 100% confirmed that the tour both increased their knowledge of local food and stated that they would buy more food.

### Comments/suggestions

- Well done, a fantastic morning's entertainment, tour guide excellent, well worth money, really enjoyed it
- Excellent enjoyed it all

### Primary motivation for going on the tour

- Food & Belfast
- Ticket was birthday gift
- Perfect combination of history, walking & food
- Local interest
- Local interest
- Love of food & history of Belfast
- To learn more about food
- Interest in local food
- Learning more about local food
- Learn more about food & Belfast
- A relaxing Saturday morning & improving local knowledge
- Sounded interesting

Sample of further feedback:

Just a brief email to thank you once again for co-ordinating the tickets for Karl, Shane and myself to join the Belfast Bred walking tour on Friday past, we all thoroughly enjoyed the experience and certainly learned a lot about the history of Belfast's food heritage. I believe the remainder of this pilot programme is completely booked out which is very encouraging indeed. Please do keep us posted if BCC intends to extend the programme into the Summer months as this initiative is something that we would be most keen to incorporate into inward buyers visits and trade food journalist programmes.

Kind regards for now,  
Shauna.

**Shauna Magill**  
**Communications Executive**  
**Food Division**  
**Invest Northern Ireland, Bedford Sq.**

Shauna, Shane and I went on the Belfast Bred Tour last Friday, and I have to say it was a brilliant tour. There were parts of Belfast I have never been to before or history which I didn't know. It was really good and well organised and the "chef" was a brilliant actor and involved everyone on the tour. I hope you are able to extend the tour into the summer and beyond as I am sure the demand will be high.

Kind regards

Karl

Karl Devlin  
Food Sector Marketing Advisor  
Scotland and Northern England  
Invest Northern Ireland, Bedford Square

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Hi John

I just wanted to pass on my thanks and appreciation to Wendi and Lesley, and Kabosh theatre, for the opportunity to bring some of the guests that you met on Friday on the Belfast Bred Tour.... The guests initially decided that they would only tag along for the first 30 minutes or so but then they enjoyed the tour so much that they re-arranged their train bookings and ended up staying for the whole thing. Monica was extremely helpful and organised for the larger group to be accommodated at the final larger venues.

I really do apologise for any trouble to Monica and Wendi, by squeezing in the additional guests but they really were very grateful for the extra effort. They were:

- Catherine Crenshaw, President of Sloss Real Estate, Birmingham Alabama who focuses on urban re-development and renewal of city centres. She is investigating the possibilities for further link-ups with Belfast.
- Tami Door, CEO of Downtown Denver Partnership which focuses on the private sector's contribution to city planning and regeneration. She is part of the planning committee for an international conference in London on downtown revitalisation projects in June.
- Pat Turner, Senior Advisor, Points of Light Institute, the national organisation which runs the Ameri-corps and Peace-corps programmes amongst other national volunteering initiatives
- Damaso Uriburu Montes, a journalist for La Prensa, a daily national newspaper in Argentina
- Esther Nieves, Board Member of Kellogg Fellowship Foundation and former head of the national immigrant and refugee rights initiative.

Nick Price did make a point of highlighting that he had accommodated some 'stowaways' so I just wanted to let you know how grateful I was and indeed our 5 guests were. (They did buy 2 copies of his cookbook so hopefully that will help!). He hopes the pilot project will be extended as he thinks it has been a great initiative.

Our visitors absolutely loved the tour and thought it was an excellent way to end their stay in Belfast. They immensely enjoyed the historic insights, the comedic moments but importantly really got a sense of the progress we are making as a city. They thoroughly enjoyed the actor and thought that the deliberate social/community contributions of the venues selected was really important. They also strongly advised extending the availability of the tour so that other tourists could enjoy the benefit of it – it is my understanding that this pilot comes to an end in mid-June. Fundamentally, we now have a group who will be very influential ambassadors for Belfast.

Kind regards, thanks and appreciation again.  
Caroline

**Caroline Wilson**  
**Policy and Business Development Manager**

**Parks and Leisure Department | Belfast City Council**

Hi Lesley,

Just a quick note to thank you for Belfast Bred pass. It was a staggeringly good production and I have been urging everyone I know to do it.

All the best

Joris

Joris Minne, Food Critic, Belfast Telegraph

## **Conclusion**

The programme delivered in 2010 has helped to develop links of the agri-food industry with the hospitality sector to enhance the visitor experience. Belfast is home to some of the finest restaurants, delis, markets that are proud to serve ingredients that have been produced in Northern Ireland.

The Great Belfast Food Week 2010 and development of the food tourism product has been a brilliant example of establishing good relationships, better co-operation and communication among the sectors. We hope to continue to develop these relationships and combine resources for future initiatives. Key partners include:

- Agri-food sector
- Belfast City Council
- Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau
- DARD
- Invest NI

- Good Food NI
- Northern Ireland Tourist board
- Pork & Bacon Forum
- Private sector restaurants, hotels, pubs and traders
- St George's Market
- Taste of Ulster

We are now in a strong position to influence future food tourism development and to work with our partners towards a common shared goal. Ultimately our objectives are to:

1. Increase visitor numbers
2. Increase visitor spend
3. Support local businesses and local producers
4. Communicate the unique and authentic selling points of our city
5. Improve and enhance the visitor experience
6. Deliver experiences that will support the core brand values.

### **The top reasons why Food Tourism matters**

- Nearly 100% of tourists dine out when travelling. Each dining opportunity is a chance to get to know and tell our unique stories about local food and people.
- Dining is consistently one of the top three favourite tourist activities.
- Food art is the only art form that speaks to all five human senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch).
- The higher the dinner bill, the more likely that the patrons are tourists.
- There is a high correlation between tourists who are interested in wine/cuisine and those interested in museums, shows, shopping, music and film festivals, and outdoor recreation.
- Interest in cuisine in travel is not reserved to a particular age, sex, or ethnic group.
- Visitors spend more time with food service personnel than any other frontline staff, up to 3 hours per day.
- Unlike other travel activities and attractions, cuisine is available year-round, any time of day and in any weather.
- Food tourists are explorers.
- Cuisine is "experiential" as it satisfies new traveller demands for hands-on, interactive experiences.