

FOOD AND DRINK EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP



Interreg 

France (Channel
Manche) England

EXPERIENCE

European Regional Development Fund



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Experience Travel Trends that resonate with the Kent food and drink offer

Culinary travel – We are booking trips with our stomachs! The number 1 travel experience. We are booking trips with our stomachs! Food and drink continue to be the top-ranking bookable experiences on both TripAdvisor and Airbnb. Food is inherently social and thanks to Instagram is one of the most shared holiday images, whether we're eating it, tasting it, making it or learning about it.

Local and Authentic – People like to meet people, so there is nothing better than to be guided by a local producer or chef.

Under Tourism - Getting away from the crowds and the tourism hotspots... discovering more of the rural offer and hidden gems.

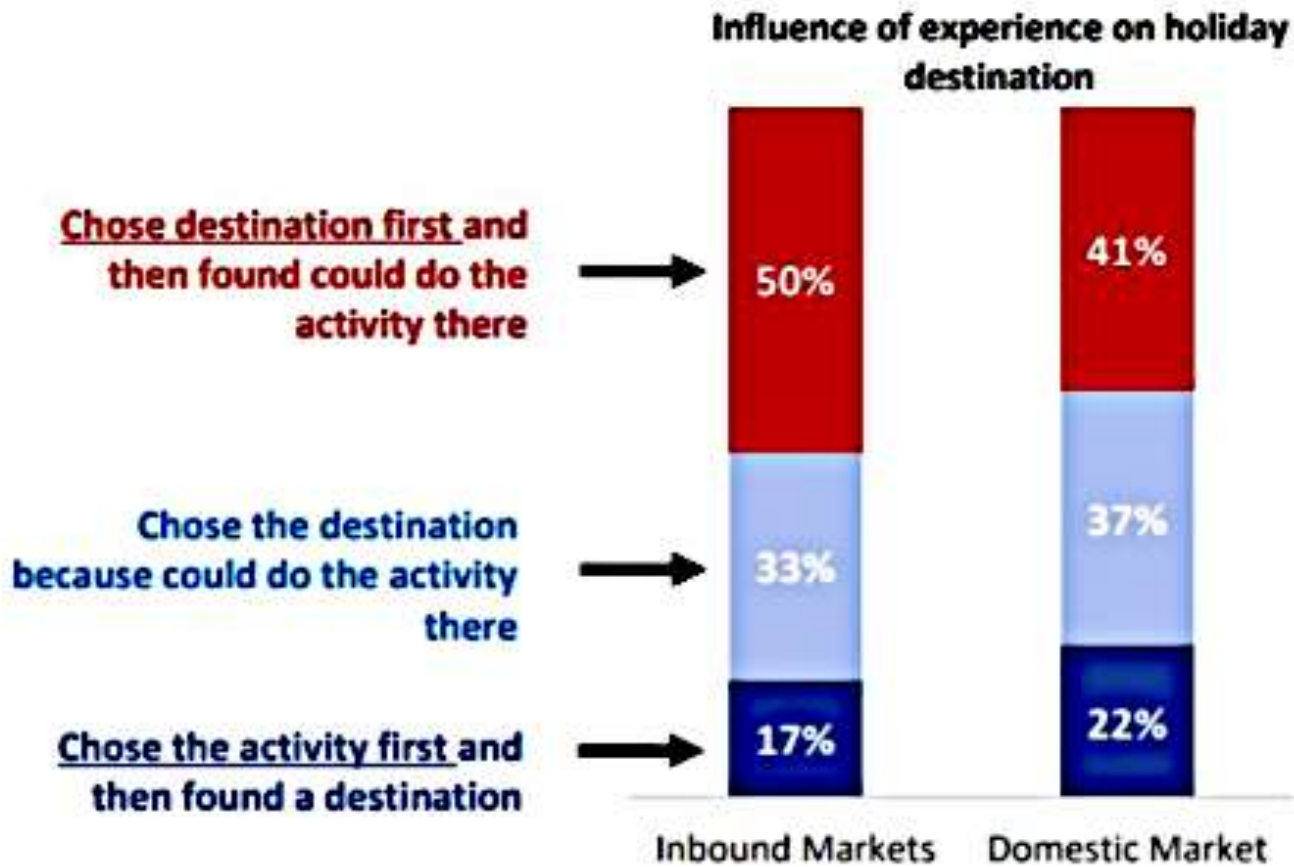
ECO Tourism & the 'Greta Thunberg' Effect- Questioning as to 'how' we travel and how many miles our food has travelled!

Reconnect – We want to reconnect with our families & Friends and what better way to do this than over fabulous food and drink.

Engaging with the countryside – experiencing rural life as well as the landscape and where our food grows.



The Benefits of experience tourism for Kent

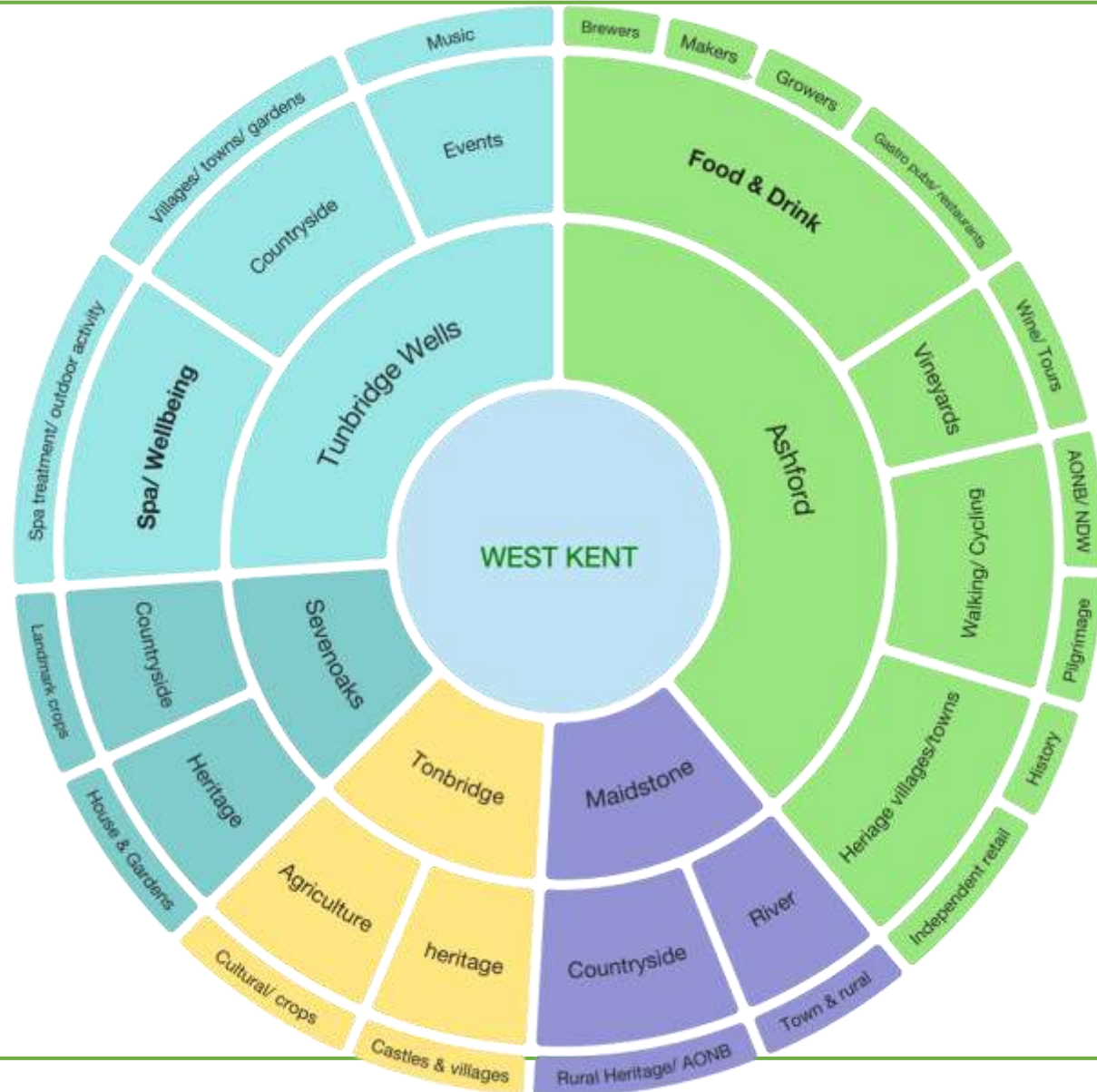


Developing travel experiences, is an effective way for a destination to reach and influence customers. From recent VisitBritain research, we already know that:

- ✓ **BOOK IN ADVANCE** - When booking an experience, 65% of the domestic market book before leaving home.
- ✓ **WILL TRAVEL OUT OF SEASON** – Many experiences are even better out of the main visitor season and can help drive footfall over these periods.
- ✓ **EXPERIENCES INFLUENCE DESTINATION CHOICE** - Nearly 60% of the domestic market are influenced by an experience when selecting a destination



Options Analysis for West Kent – Core Strengths

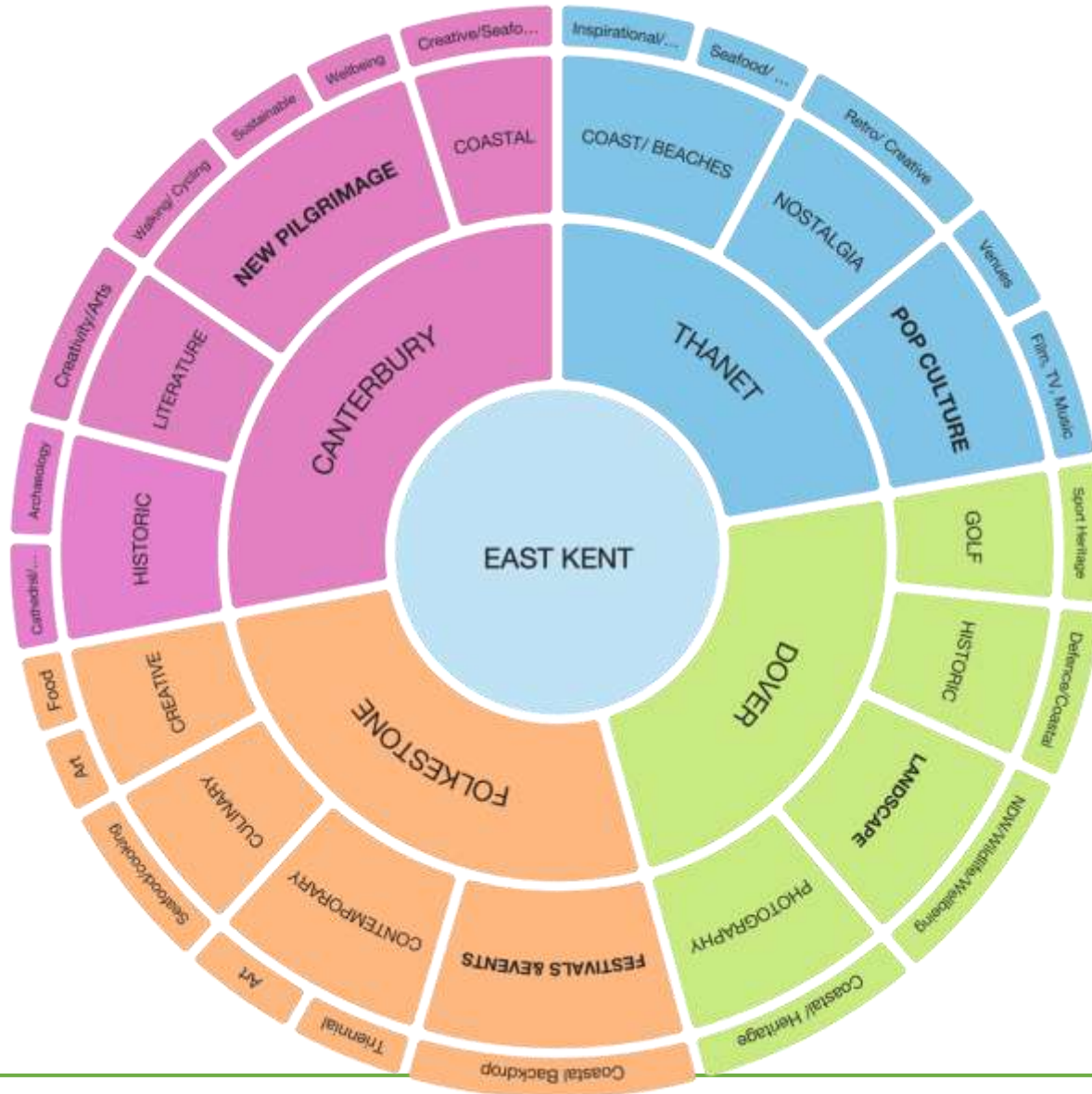


Food and Drink product gaps and opportunities:

- ✓ Food and Drink
- ✓ Vineyards
- ✓ Green Fingers
- ✓ The Plant to Plate Revolution
- ✓ The Farming Landscape
- ✓ Agricultural calendar



Options Analysis for East Kent – Core Strengths



Food and Drink product gaps and opportunities:

- ✓ Closer to the coast - Seafood
- ✓ Behind the scenes
- ✓ Cooking classes
- ✓ Foraging and wild cooking
- ✓ Vegan offer



Options Analysis for North Kent – Core Strengths



Food and Drink product gaps and opportunities:

- ✓ Fruit and hop growing heritage
- ✓ Farmers Markets
- ✓ Multicultural food offer
- ✓ Producers and growers
- ✓ Distillers and Brewers



Building on the current food and drink product for Ashford Borough

The food & drink back story – Increasingly consumers want to know where their food and drink comes from - The close proximity of grower to retailer in Ashford Borough opens up the opportunity to combine both hop garden and brewer/ Orchard and cider maker and vineyard to winery or cow to cheese!

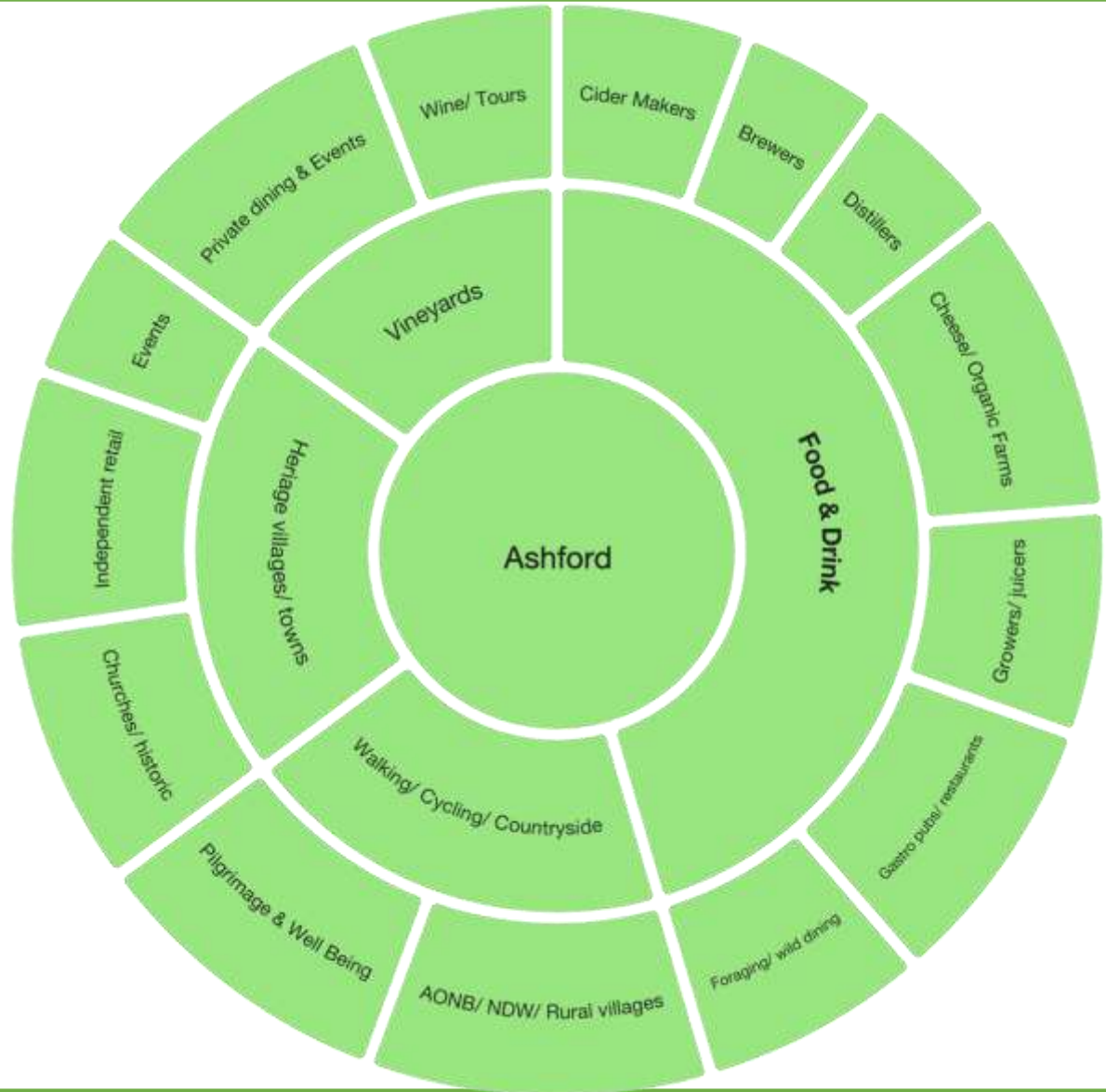
The vineyard trail – With the county’s highest concentration of vineyards and the largest number of hectares under vine; wine tourism offers Ashford the opportunity to be an experience product leader in this field.

Food miles and gastro pubs – The Borough is known for heritage villages & towns; where in many instances the heritage pub/ tearoom offer is the only economic engager for the day visitor. Greater focus on the local food producers and telling this story, highlighting seasonality can create a reason to travel.

Niche experiences – Although niche, the creative/ rural craft courses and heritage insider experiences, such as driving a steam train, meeting a big cat or learning a rural craft have both the potential to drive off season visits and also overnight stays.



Strengthened and enhanced via a sustainable commitment

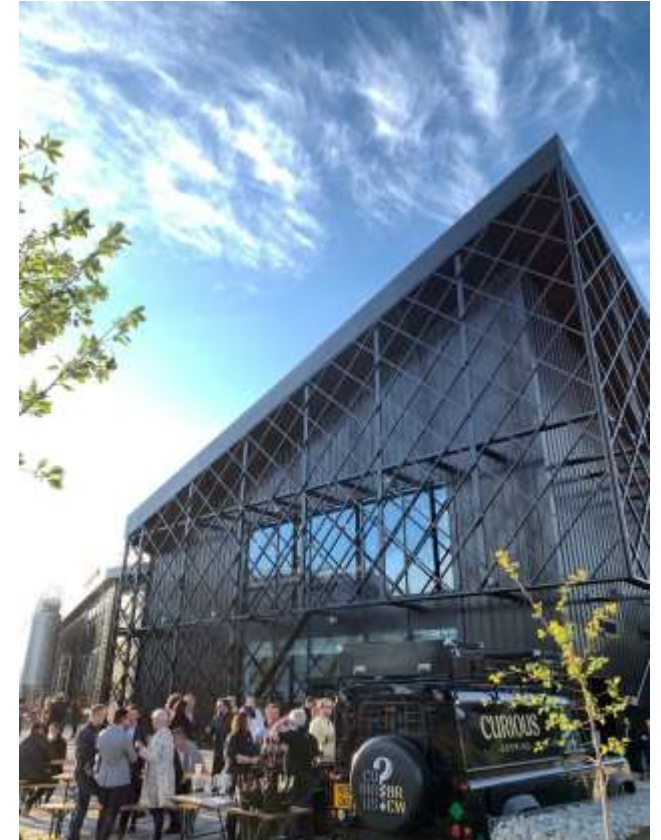


MANY OF THESE PRODUCT AREAS ARE INTERLINKED



Ashford Borough Product Priorities – Opportunities & Gaps

	Primary Themes	Gaps analysis for selected themes
Ashford	Food and drink	<p>This is a real strength for the district, where wine is a dominant feature. Not only does the district house leading brands such as Chapel Down, Gusbourne and Curious Brew, but it also has the small family producers such as Nightingale cider and Westwell wines.</p> <p>By focusing on the experience of visiting, learning and sampling the produce, the district can position itself at the heart of food and drink production for the county. However, there are some gaps:</p> <p>Events - The events programme delivered around food and drink should nurture and showcase homegrown talent, at present many of the food & drink events are delivered by national events organisers who although try to recruit local exhibitors do not have an underlying commitment to ‘buy local’. As a result, an opportunity is missed to introduce residents let alone visitors to the borough and Kent wide offer.</p> <p>Visitors want to experience the back story as well as the food on the plate, when this comes together as a complete product it is a winning formula. Encouraging the development of experience food & drink products, that takes the consumer on a complete journey and builds a relationship, and will galvanise Ashford’s position as a premier food & drink Destination.</p> <p>This connection with the food and drink journey is also a great way to connect visitors with the borough’s walking and cycling product, there are several vineyards located directly on the NDW, along with farm based accommodation and numerous rural gastro pubs that pride themselves to be sourcing local, so providing a great opportunity to promote culinary sections of the North Downs Way or Stour Valley Way.</p>



Food & Drink

NEXT STEPS AND FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES



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EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Develop an all-year round product offer that will not only help your business to grow but also help your business become more resilient to future challenges.



THE PROJECT PERKS

- 1 1:1 Specialist Consultation**
Specialist consultancy to support the development of a business plan for the launch of your new product
- 2 Product Testing**
Market testing of your concept with consumers and travel trade, and feed back to further develop your product
- 3 Content Development**
New photography for your product and inclusion in inspirational content
- 4 Consumer marketing**
Inclusion in targeted off-season consumer campaigns to market your product
- 5 B2B distribution**
Distribution of your product to the travel trade through our established B2B connections and networks

The total estimated value of what you receive is £6,000



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APPLICATIONS

125 places available on the programme

70 + applications received in the first round

Deadline to apply 31st December 2020

Collaborative / joint applications encouraged



**Farmers. Producers. Artists. Sailors. Surfers. Chefs. Yoga Instructors.
Vineyards. Distillers. Pubs. Creators. Photographers. Attractions. Hotels.
Foragers. Astronomers. Upcyclers. Historians. Bird Watchers. Actors**