

Bookable Food and Drink Tourism Experiences Toolkit



Introduction

Scotland offers exceptional food and drink tourism experiences, from tours and tastings to hands on cookery classes and events, but it is not always easy for people to find and book them.

For many food and drink producers, tourism may be a new venture, and the way the sector operates can feel quite different from production, farming, or running a hospitality business. Understanding who your customers are, their expectations, pricing experiences, and navigating booking systems may all be unfamiliar territory.

This toolkit guides those new to tourism experiences. At the same time, for businesses that already offer experiences, it gives valuable insight on how to reach more customers and increase sales by promoting in the right places – whether using online platforms, social media, or working with the travel trade.

Created by Scotland Food & Drink, the toolkit supports small and medium sized businesses and individuals to:

- Develop and sell food tourism experiences
- Create new food tourism experiences
- Engage customers and create additional revenue streams
- Support those new to selling through tourism channels

How To Use The Toolkit

The Bookable Food and Drink Experiences Toolkit takes a step-by-step approach to help you to make it easy for customers to find, book, and enjoy your experiences with:

Practical Guidance: actionable advice tailored to the specific challenges of small and micro-businesses in food and farming, production, and hospitality

Interactive Components: expert master-classes and worksheets with examples and exercises to apply

Checklists: to steer improvement and track progress

The desire for food and drink experiences is always evolving, bringing new trends, updated technology, and fresh opportunities. To stay up to date, use this toolkit as a starting point. You can adapt it to fit your business and build on with your own research.



Business Storytelling



Business Storytelling
Masterclass

Janet Gordon

blue starfish

Watch The Masterclass: Business Storytelling

Running Time: 60 minutes

Worksheet: Storytelling, how to formulate, develop and communicate

When you are busy, it's tempting to dismiss your business story as a frivolous 'nice to have' and not something that impacts sales. But we know humans enjoy stories, and good stories have a positive impact.

Business storytelling shares your journey, values, and passion in a way that connects with customers on an emotional level. Told well, it can build trust, differentiate you from competitors, and make your products and experiences memorable. A strong story can be as simple or as complex and multi-layered as you want it to be.

In this masterclass, **Janet Gordon, Blue Starfish Consulting**, investigates the detail and structures of business storytelling.

Checklist

Before starting step 2, use this checklist to see if you're telling your business story in a way that connects with customers. Score each question with -

Yes (2 points) or **No** (0 points).

- Do you explain the origins of your food or drink business in a simple, clear way?
- Does your story include personal touches like family history, what inspires you, or what you care about?
- Do you share your story in different places, like your website, social media, or when talking to customers?
- Can customers understand your story quickly, in just a few sentences?
- Do you use pictures or videos to help tell your story (e.g., behind-the-scenes, your team, your process)?
- Does your story help customers feel a connection to you and what you do?

How Did You Score?

10-12 points – Great news! Your story is clear and engaging

6-8 points – You're on the right track, but you can make your story even stronger

0-4 points – Your story might not be reaching customers yet – think about how you can share it more clearly and personally

Creating Memorable Experiences That Sell

Food tourism isn't just popular, it's a powerful way to support local culture, producers, and communities. But to truly stand out, experiences must offer more than just a meal or tasting – they need to connect with people. What makes an experience memorable is its sense of place, purpose, and personality.

Thoughtful storytelling and rich local detail can create something that feels special and meaningful. The difference between “local fruit” and “hand-picked berries from our 3rd generation family farm” are touches that can build emotion, spark memories, and encourage bookings.

In this masterclass, **Mary Tebje, Tebje Associates**, looks beyond the what of experiences (e.g. a tour, a tasting, a class) to start communicating the why – why it matters, why you created it, and why it's worth doing.

Checklist

Before starting step 3, use this checklist to see how well your experience is shaping up to impress customers.

Score each question with **Yes** (2 points) or **No** (0 points).

- Does your experience offer something customers can't get anywhere else – something special connected to your business, place, or story?
- Have you planned out the key moments of the experience, from welcome to farewell, so it flows well and feels organised?
- Do customers get to see, taste, try, or learn something hands-on during the experience?
- Do you share the why behind the experience, not just the what?
- Have you tested or run the experience before, and made improvements based on feedback or your own observations?
- Are you using specific, meaningful language (not just generic phrases) to describe what you offer?

Worksheet: Paint pictures, spark curiosity, and invite guests into memorable experiences

Bookable Experience Development Programme Creating food & drink experiences that sell

30 October 2024 with Mary Tebje



Watch The Masterclass: Creating memorable experiences that sell

Running Time: 60 minutes



How Did You Score?

10–12 points – Your experience is well thought-out and likely to leave a lasting impression

6–8 points – You've made a good start – just a few tweaks could make it even stronger

0–4 points – Time to build it up! Start with your story, structure, and what makes your experience special

Getting Your Price Right

Setting the right price goes beyond covering your expenses; it's about making your offer feel valuable and sustainable. It is therefore critical to understand your costs – both visible and hidden – by exploring mark-up, margin, and the value of your time and materials. Knowing these numbers helps you to set prices that are both fair and profitable.

But pricing isn't only about the maths, it's about value. Customers often don't choose based on cost alone; they want something that feels worthwhile. That's why your price should also reflect what makes your experience special.

In this masterclass, **Hilary Knight** from **Natural Partnerships CIC**, guides you beyond guesswork to have the confidence to charge what your experience is worth.

Worksheet: How to Price your Experience

Additional Resource: A handy tool for pricing mark-up and margin

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Getting Your Pricing Right

Hilary Knight

Follow The Masterclass: Getting your pricing right presentation

Checklist

Before starting step 4, use this checklist to see whether your pricing is clear, confident, and sustainable.

Score each question with **Yes** (2 points) or **No** (0 points).

- Have you worked out the full cost of running your experience, including your time, materials, and overheads?
- Do you understand the difference between mark-up and margin, and how it applies to your pricing?
- Does your price reflect the value and uniqueness of your experience, not just the cost to deliver it?
- Have you clearly communicated what's included in the price, so customers know what to expect?
- Do you feel confident explaining or standing by your price if asked by a customer?
- Have you considered how your pricing fits with your target audience, seasonality, and other local offers?

How Did You Score?

10–12 points – Your pricing is clear, confident, and well thought-out

6–8 points – A good start, but there's room to strengthen your pricing strategy

0–4 points – Time to dig into the details; knowing your costs and value is key to long-term success



Marketing Refresher

Is your marketing effective? Whether you're new to marketing or haven't reviewed it in a while, it's worth checking to make sure you're reaching the right people in the right way.

The promotion part of the marketing mix covers everything from clear messages that stand out and connect with your customers to consistently applied branding including the overall tone and style your business presents.

A simple marketing plan, smart use of email, and tracking what works best can help you to focus your time, attention and budget where they matter most.

In this masterclass, **Jackie Ellis** from **Tourism Angles**, revisits the basics of small business marketing with examples, practical insights and exercises.

[Worksheet:](#) Marketing Refresher

[Additional Resource:](#) Marketing exercise handout



Checklist

Before starting step 5, use this checklist to see if your marketing is working effectively or could use a refresh.

Score each question with **Yes** (2 points) or **No** (0 points).

- Do you have a clear idea of who your ideal customer is and what they're looking for?
- Does your business have a clear personality or tone that comes across in your marketing?
- Is your branding (logo, tone, visuals) consistent across your website, emails, and social media?
- Do you have a simple marketing plan that guides your activity – either campaign by campaign or throughout the year?
- Are you using email marketing to stay in touch with past or potential customers?
- Do you regularly check which marketing activities are working – and adjust what you do based on what you learn?

How Did You Score?

10–12 points: You've got a strong grasp of the marketing essentials – keep going!

6–8 points: You're on the right track but there's room to improve

0–4 points: Time for a marketing reset – revisiting the basics will really help

Introducing Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly useful and accessible tool for small businesses, offering a wide range of practical benefits. From generating text, images, social media content and videos to managing schedules, responding to enquiries, and sorting data, AI can help you save time, stay organised, and unlock creativity. Many tools are free or low-cost and easy to experiment with.

However, AI isn't perfect – it can make mistakes, misinterpret tone, or produce inaccurate content. So, how does AI work, what are different ways to use it effectively, and what ethical considerations should you keep in mind?

In this masterclass, **Gary Ennis** from **NS Design**, looks at popular AI tools and some day-to-day uses.

[Worksheet:](#) Introduction to AI



Checklist

Before starting step 6, use this checklist to see how ready you are to incorporate AI into your business.

Score each question with **Yes** (2 points) or **No** (0 points).

- Have you explored at least one AI tool to see what it can do?
- Do you feel confident that AI could help save you time with routine tasks?
- Have you identified at least one area of work where AI could be useful?
- Are you aware of the importance of checking AI-generated content for accuracy and tone?

- Do you know how to give clear and specific instructions (prompts) to get better AI results?
- Have you considered setting boundaries for how and when you use AI, to stay in control?

How Did You Score?

10–12 Points: You're AI-aware and ready to explore further

6–8 Points: You're on the right track, keep experimenting

0–4 Points: A good start, try out one tool and see what happens!

Social Media Engagement

In fast-changing spaces like social media platforms, how do you keep up and make your voice heard?

It's important to be clear about who you're trying to reach and what you want to achieve. Also to appreciate the power of social influence, and why what others say about your business through their comments and recommendations often matters more than what you say yourself.

With a clear strategy based on how different algorithms (programmes) work, the tools to plan and schedule your content effectively, and how to measure what's effective through insights and engagement, social media can become a valuable and manageable part of your marketing.

In this masterclass **Gary Ennis** from **NS Design**, explains how to focus your efforts effectively and use social media in a way that supports your business.

Checklist

Before starting step 7, use this checklist to assess the effectiveness of your approach.

Score each question with **Yes** (2 points) or **No** (0 points).

- Do you know who your target audience is and what you want to achieve with social media?
- Are you using content that encourages interaction, such as questions, stories, or user-generated posts?
- Have you explored scheduling tools to help plan and manage your posts in advance?
- Do you understand how social media algorithms affect who sees your content?
- Are you encouraging and sharing content or reviews from your customers?
- Do you regularly check your insights or analytics to see what content performs best?

Worksheet: Improve your social media engagement



How Did You Score?

10–12 points: You're engaging with purpose - keep it up!

6–8 points: A solid start – small changes can make a big impact

0–4 points: Time to revisit your strategy and try a few new tools to help you

Online Booking and Distribution

Considered complex, easy to get wrong, and therefore easier to ignore, this step navigates online booking for food and drink tours and experiences. Whatever stage of the digital journey you're at, if taking bookings entirely offline or already using online systems, different layers and combinations of technology can help business growth.

From improving the customer journey and increasing sales conversions, to automating administration tasks and freeing up time for other things, taking and managing bookings online brings real, tangible benefits, and can support your marketing and visibility.

In this slide deck, **Jessica Gregory** from **Palisis TourCMS**, simplifies the bigger picture with examples and advice.

Explore The Presentation: The practicalities of how to price your tourism experience



Checklist

Before starting step 8, use this checklist to assess your current position.

Score each question with **Yes** (2 points) or **No** (0 points).

- Can customers book your food/drink tour or experience online without needing to phone or email you first?
- Do you have a live, visible calendar showing availability?
- Can you take payments or deposits automatically?
- Do you use any automated admin tools (e.g. booking confirmations, reminders, or follow-ups)?
- Is your booking system integrated with your website or social media channels?
- Do you use a channel manager to connect and manage availability across multiple platforms (e.g. your own site, OTAs, or regional listings)?

How Did You Score?

10–12 points – A strong, well-integrated and efficient booking process

6–8 points – A good foundation with key systems in place and some gaps to fill

0–4 points – At an early stage, time to build confidence to offer a streamlined booking set-up



Working with Media and Influencers

Working with media and influencers is a handy way to build visibility and credibility. Traditional media like newspapers, magazines, and radio, often focus on broader stories, while influencers typically share niche, personal content with highly engaged audiences.

However, working with them is rarely easy. It requires understanding of what is involved, how they can help promote

your experiences, what to look for in potential partners, and how to approach them effectively. You'll also learn about payments and the power of business 'nuggets'– those often-overlooked quirky details or behind-the-scenes stories that media and influencers love to feature.

In this masterclass, **Julia Bryce** explains how media and influencers work and the ways to gain their endorsement/engage their interest.

Checklist

Before finishing the toolkit, use this checklist to assess your current position.

Score each question with - **Yes** (2 points) or **No** (0 points).

- Do you understand the difference between traditional media and influencers?
- Have you researched which media outlets or influencers are a good match for your business?
- Do you have high-quality photos and key information ready to share if asked?
- Are you clear about the story or message you want to promote?
- Have you identified potential 'nuggets' that make you stand out?
- Are you open to building long-term relationships instead of one-off coverage?

How Did You Score?

10-12 points – You're well prepared – time to get your story out there!

6-8 points – You're on the right track – a little more planning will boost your results

0-4 points – It's worth stepping back to plan and prepare before communicating

Worksheet: Illustrative Media Match

Julia Bryce PR
Taste Buds of Scotland
@juliabryce92

Working with the media and influencers

to Julia Bryce
@msn.com

Watch the Masterclass: Working with the media and influencers.

Running Time: 75 minutes



Selling Through the Travel Trade

The travel trade refers to tour operators, travel agents and DMCs (Destination Management Companies) who package and sell experiences on your behalf. This is a powerful way to reach international and high-value customers, but it works differently from direct bookings.

You'll need to know how the travel trade operates, that groups are only part of it, and what is meant by trade-ready

products, with consistent pricing, clear availability, and quick response times. So how can you generate sales through trade partners, what do they require of you and how can you price your experiences to remain profitable?

In this masterclass, **Karin Gidlund** from **Karin Tourism Solutions**, explains what the travel trade is and how it works.

Checklist

Before starting step 9, use this checklist to assess your readiness to sell to the travel trade.

Score each question with **Yes** (2 points) or **No** (0 points).

- Do you understand what the travel trade is, and how it helps sell experiences?
- Can you offer consistent pricing and availability for trade partners?
- Do you have commissionable or net rates that allow for trade markups?
- Are your experiences trade ready - easy to understand (e.g. clear descriptions, durations, what's included)?
- Do you respond promptly and professionally to trade enquiries?
- Are you open to building long-term trade relationships rather than relying on one-off bookings?

How Did You Score?

10-12 points – Your experience is well thought-out and likely to leave a lasting impression

6-8 points – You've made a good start – just a few tweaks could make it even stronger

0-4 points – Time to build it up! Start with your story, structure, and what makes your experience special

Worksheet: Selling to the Travel Trade

Additional resource: Travel Trade product sheet template

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Bookable Experiences Programme

Selling through the travel trade

May 2025

Watch the Masterclass: Selling to the travel trade

Running Time: 90 minutes





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