

CULTIVATING CONNECTIONS TRAVEL PLANNERS



Top 10 Ways to Turn Your Vacation
Into a Culinary Adventure

Hi there!

Thanks so much for downloading my guide, which is chock full of 10 ways you can fuel your foodie spirit on your next travel adventure.

I put this list together to help you embark on an enriching group getaway that speaks to your big passion—food! As a group travel specialist, I've found that group trips are always more fun when they're centered around your shared passions. So for foodies, it just makes sense to build in lots of opportunities to explore the culinary traditions of your destination.

Not to mention, diving deep into regional cuisine is one of the best ways to really get to know your destination in more depth. I hope these ideas help you put a tasty twist on your next group vacation!

Share the journey,

Erin

Erin Smith

Founder, Cultivating Connections Travel Planners



#1 Don an apron for a cooking class.



A chef-led cooking class is a classic way to get a true taste for your destination's cuisine. Plus, you learn a few new culinary skills to take home—and that's the best kind of souvenir!

There are a couple of ways I like to enhance the classic cooking class abroad. For one, seek out cooking classes that take place in the chef's own home (or restaurant). There's something so special and intimate about being invited into the chef's world; not only do you learn new cooking techniques, you get a glimpse into how the locals really live. Or—spring for a private experience and have the chef come to you! This works especially well if your group is staying at a private villa or sprawling apartment. Take advantage of all the space you have and put your kitchen to good use!

#2 Explore with a market tour.



Join a market tour led by a local expert to see what local farmers and producers are cooking up. In many regions of the world, markets are a part of daily life, so you'll get to mingle with the locals as you taste spectacular produce and regional delicacies. This is the spot to pick up some souvenirs for your foodie friends back home, too!

#3 Visit a vineyard.



Experience the local “terroir” with a visit to a vineyard for a tasting, and hopefully a stroll through the gorgeous vines. Don’t limit your vineyard excursions to just France or Italy—more and more destinations around the world are producing interesting wines. South Africa (home to the longest “wine trail” in the world), New Zealand, Argentina, Germany, Switzerland, and Portugal are other wine hotspots you can consider.

#4 Go on a brewery or distillery tour.



Bottoms up! Get a behind-the-scenes look at how your favorite tippie or brew comes together on a brewery or distillery tour. Some breweries and distilleries have been in operation for decades (or even more than a century!), making this a fascinating option for history buffs as well. Famous can’t-miss brewery and distillery tours include the Guinness Storehouse in Dublin, and Habitation Clément, which crafts *rhum agricole* (cane juice rum) on the island of Martinique.

#5 Go straight to the source with a tour of a local farm.



Take a trip out into the countryside to a working farm; many focus on producing a specific type of delicacy, like a certain regional cheese. Hear from the farmers, taste a range of morsels, and develop a greater appreciation for local goods. Some farms also offer overnight stays, with delicious dinners or breakfasts included. That's taking the "farm-to-table" concept to a whole new level!

#6 Stay up late for the night markets.



Night markets are huge in many parts of East Asia. If you're visiting Vietnam, Cambodia, or Taiwan don't miss one. When the sun goes down, that's when the cooking heats up. Vendors fire up their woks and grills for hungry customers, who chomp and chat away late into the night.

#7 Find the “best of the best.”



Many cities are known for a particular type of food stuff—in Brussels, it's chocolate, in Parma, it's Prosciutto, and in County Cork, Ireland, it's cheese. Make it your mission to taste your way through the city to find the very best version of the local delicacy. Find a walking tour with a culinary focus, or create your own by plotting out your stops in Google Maps.

#8 Pack a picnic.



Often, the best foods in your destination won't be found in the high-end restaurants. Instead of chasing a Michelin star, sample a range of cuisines and patronage local businesses by putting together your own gourmet picnic. Buy cheese from the cheese shop, salami from the butcher, and a sweet from the bakery to top it all off. Then find a shady public space to sprawl out and eat up. It's a great way to give yourself permission to stop, savor, and simply rest a bit in your destination. Honestly, nothing beats a leisurely picnic along the banks of the Seine or the grassy stretches of London's Hyde Park.

#9 Hire a private chef.



Vacations are supposed to be relaxing. But packing too much in—museum visit after walking tour after dinner reservation—can leave you feeling exhausted. Recharge with a gourmet meal prepared in your own home-away-from-home by a private chef. Your chef can customize the menu for you (and this is a great option if you have travelers with dietary restrictions in your group, too). I think this is an especially good option for the day you arrive in your destination, or the day before you leave; you get to enjoy a leisurely dining experience right before (or after!) a lot of travel.

#10 Try a street food tour.



There's something especially tasty about street food—it's often made in a flash, on an open fire or grill, and is easy to eat on the go. In many places, an abundance of street food stalls are considered a part of the region's cultural heritage! Go with a reputable tour company who can guide you to the best spots in town and take care of the ordering for you (so you don't hold up the line). Street food is a must-try in many Asian countries like Thailand, the Philippines, and Japan.



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inspired travel tips?***
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insider travel advice on the
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