

# The New York Times

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## Eating and Drinking Your Way Through A Trip, and Learning Something in the Process

Culinary travel is on the rise, but it's not just food on the menu: Tours are offering deeper investigations into the cultural and geographic factors that surround what's on your plate.



A cooking class on a 7-day tour of the Emilia Romagna region of Italy. [Photo: Michael Grecco](#)

By Elaine Glusac

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When it comes to consuming a culture, it's hard to beat digesting it in the literal sense, which may explain the explosion of food-related trips.

From Texas to Turkey, food is a point of differentiation for many destinations and, according to the United Nation's [World Tourism Organization](#), has helped drive tourism to rural regions, giving often needy areas new income to supplement agriculture.

Counting culinary travelers is nearly impossible; after all, everyone eats. But in a 2016 survey, the [World Food Travel Association](#), a nonprofit organization devoted to education and research in the culinary travel field, found that 59 percent of respondents believe food and drinks are more important when they travel than five years earlier.

In the decade or so since culinary travel began whetting the appetites of gastronomers, food-related travel has shifted from pure consumption — hitting that bucket list of Michelin-starred restaurants — to deeper investigations into where food comes from and the cultural and geographic factors that influence it.

Back in Italy, the Italian owners of [Discover Your Italy](#) have begun designing private hiking and skiing itineraries in the Dolomites around their favorite rifugi, or Alpine huts, a modest term for a growing network of rustic restaurants with refined food (six days from \$4,000).