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I attended a workshop entitled “Hungry for Finland (H4F)” which is part of a national strategy and it is the first Finnish FOOD&TOURISM strategy (2015-2020). It is aimed at promoting local foods with the help of H4F workshops, especially for tourism operators and developers working in the field.

Workshops in several regions of Finland will be held in forthcoming years. In addition, food products in Finnish museums will be developed and there will be events in co-operation with the Finnish Museums Association and Finland Festivals organization.

The H4F workshop for Rovaniemi was held at the Multidimensional Tourism Institute on Tuesday, 1st November, 2016. The event was organized in Finnish with some materials in English and it was led by Kristiina Havas & Kristian Sievers from Haaga-Helia University of Applied Science, Helsinki. The main aims of the strategy are:

- to build active national networks
- define the roles of operators and have shared common goals for the future
- develop food tourism with the help of best products
- to communicate widely to all participants, operators and customers about our core products and processes

I have been asked several times by tourists to the arctic environment who are often curious about local foods - where they can find one as they wish to sample an authentic arctic cuisine while in the region. I try my best to guide them in the right direction as to where they can receive further help. With Rovaniemi playing host to many visitors from different parts of the world, their diversity will need to be catered for through a diverse range of foods in addition to the local cuisine. In line with the mission of H4F “Mitä useampi kokki, sen maukkaampi soppa” which can be literally translated as “The more the cook the tastier the soup”. It was inspiring to interact with other relevant stakeholders in Lapland on this important topic.

According to Visit Finland representative in Rovaniemi, there is a rising demand from tourists for kosher, vegan and halal restaurants. Similarly, there are requests for children friendly restaurants. We

brain-stormed on how to meet the demands of different groups of visitors to Lapland such as the Asian guests, Russian guests, Family with children and Senior citizens. Best practices were also shared from 'Finland meets Island' and 'Copenhagen cooking festival' www.copenhagencooking.com [2]

Ilkka Hanski, (who passed on in May this year), was an evolutionary biologist from the Viikki Campus of the University of Helsinki who advocated the coexistence of Man and Nature, his work changed our understanding on how biodiversity is maintained. The relationship of food and health, the gut and the brain are interesting topics. On the microbial level, there are ongoing research interests in this kind of interaction that are related to "personal genomics" - our gut bacteria and environmental bacteria can play dominant impacts on our wellbeing. Apart from our genes, the colonization of the gut by bacteria at birth are mostly influenced by the environment and what we eat, the more diverse the better. This relates to the old aged question "Is it nature or nurture?"

Nadya Zhexembayeva's first newsletter on food (October 2016) entitled "Reinventing food" in which she highlighted recent discoveries on the relationship that humans have with food was truly a source of inspiration on future outlooks. The practice of agriculture for food from time immemorial has been a combination of scientific, artistic and indigenous knowledge. This has continue to challenge our thinking to innovate and respond to consumers' needs. I reckon 'food and tourism' are interlinked, an insight can be gained about the lives of people based on their diet and narratives behind it. From a linguistic point of view i.e English language, the word Agriculture when split into two yields Agri-culture - the art of cultivating soil, producing crops or natural plants, raising livestock including mini-livestock (insects) for food. So no doubt, food should go with tradition and culture.

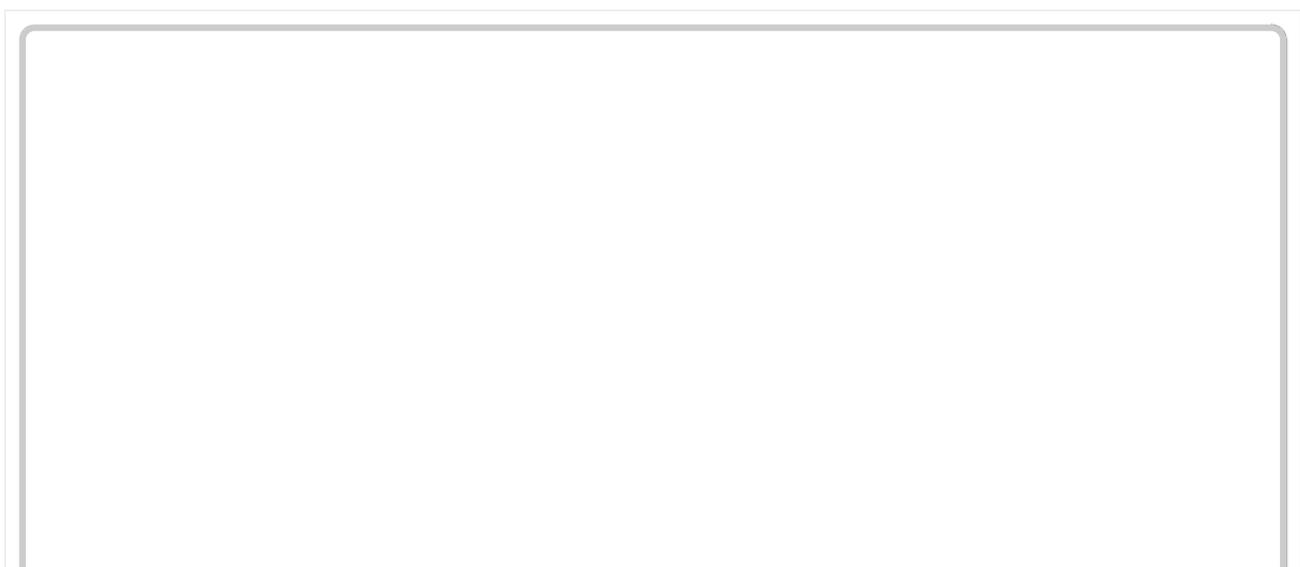
@Rah_del [3]

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this blog are that of the author and does not in any shape or form represent the official position of the Arctic Centre.

Further information:

http://www.e-julkaisu.fi/haaga-helia/food_tourism_strategy_2015-2020/ [4]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weskzCKki-s> [5]





Tags:
[food security](#) [6]

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Links

[1] <https://www.husarctic.org/en/team/bamidele-raheem>

[2] <http://www.copenhagencooking.com>

[3] http://twitter.com/Rah_del

[4] http://www.e-julkaisu.fi/haaga-helia/food_tourism_strategy_2015-2020/

[5] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weskszCKki-s>

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