

# MUSEUMS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE NOTION OF FOOD HERITAGISATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE LOFOTEN ISLANDS

## O CONTRIBUTO DO MUSEU PARA A NOÇÃO DE PATRIMÓNIO ALIMENTAR: UM CASO DE ESTUDO NAS ILHAS LOFOTEN

ANNA INSA VERMEHREN,

Stiftelsen Museum Nord

[anna.vermehren@museumnord.no](mailto:anna.vermehren@museumnord.no)

<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3515-1899>

JONAS WALDSØE

Stiftelsen Museum Nord

[jonas.walsole@museumnord.no](mailto:jonas.walsole@museumnord.no)

<http://orcid.org/0009-0001-5035-2851>

### ABSTRACT

In this paper the authors explore how various agents – such as museums, destination companies or small businesses – have actively contributed to food heritagisation on the Lofoten Islands in Northern Norway. By examining the thematic elements and storylines that these agents convey to a broad audience, and by considering their role in the tourism sector, we assert that their collaboration serves as the driving force for preserving and promoting culinary traditions. We specifically focus on the significance of

museums as pivotal institutions in shaping identity. We employ the concept of food heritagisation and test it on the Lofoten Islands as our primary example.

Our findings offer an analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by agents who contribute to food heritagisation on the Lofoten Islands. Moreover, we argue that museums, in conjunction with other local agents, are playing an increasingly influential role in the process of food heritagisation particularly in regions with high tourism. Ultimately, we conclude that the heritagisation of food on the Lofoten Islands represents an overall positive step towards fostering more sustainable and innovative forms of tourism.

#### **KEYWORDS**

Food heritagisation, role of museums, tourism trends, food identity, Lofoten Islands.

#### **RESUMO**

Neste artigo, avaliamos o contributo de vários agentes – museus, agências de viagens e pequenos negócios – na promoção do património alimentar nas Ilhas Lofoten no norte da Noruega. Ao analisarmos os elementos temáticos e os filões históricos que tais agentes fazem chegar a um vasto público, e considerando o seu papel no setor do turismo, entende-se que a sua colaboração atua como uma força propulsora da preservação e promoção de tradições culinárias. Assim, a nossa atenção fixa-se na importância dos museus enquanto instituições que moldam a identidade e utilizamos também o conceito de património alimentar, aplicando-o às ilhas Lofoten. Além disso, sustentamos que os museus, em colaboração com outros agentes locais, assumem cada vez mais relevo na divulgação do património alimentar, particularmente em zonas bastante turísticas. Finalmente, concluímos que nas Ilhas Lofoten esse património representa um passo globalmente positivo na promoção de formas de turismo mais sustentáveis e inovadoras.

#### **PALAVRAS-CHAVE**

Herança alimentar, papel dos museus, tendências do turismo, património alimentar, Ilhas Lofoten.

## Introduction

Since Kaiser Wilhelm's visit in 1889, Lofoten has emerged as an iconic and exceptional visitor destination. The harsh climate north of the Arctic Circle, coupled with the perceived beauty of the landscape has contributed to its high international reputation since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While tourism to the region is nothing new and goes through periods of transformation, its development has accelerated at a faster pace than in other areas of Norway since the 1990s. Supported by the government, agents such as destination companies, tour operators, restaurants and museums have played an active role in this development. As employment in the fisheries declined, tourism emerged as a multi-sector, engaging professionals from diverse fields on the Lofoten Islands.<sup>1</sup>

The increase in tourism has resulted in an increased demand for accommodation, cultural and natural activities, and culinary experiences. To cater for these demands, the tourism industry and cultural sector worked together to actively pursue product development that offered unique and tailored experiences rooted in the traditions and heritage of the Lofoten Islands. As part of this ongoing development, local food products were created to align with the region's predominant heritage narratives. These food products were then made available in shops, restaurants, and tourist outlets, effectively contributing to the concept of "food heritagisation".

In this paper we analyse the role museums and other actors play in the process of food heritagisation. For this, we use the Lofoten Islands as a case study. We present an overview of tourism and trends from the 1990s until today. Reflections about museums as a place for shaping identity will lead us to describe how food culture is communicated to the public and utilised in the process of food heritagisation.

Our findings include an analysis of challenges and opportunities the agents who contribute to food heritagisation face. Finally, we argue that the heritagisation of food on the Lofoten Islands represents an overall positive step towards achieving a more sustainable and innovative tourism approach.

---

1 Fitchett, Lindberg & Martin 2021: 5.

## The power of stories

Today, tourism has been institutionalised through destination companies and others who are branding the Lofoten region's nature and experience potential.<sup>2</sup> The steady increase of visitors to the region stimulated the need for a professionalised and organised tourism sector that could serve the needs of the visitors and provide them with extraordinary experiences based on local traditions. Hiking, fishing, food and eating, understanding of the region's culture and people were made into products that sell. "Visit Lofoten" has become the region's destination marketing company, a communication channel between local agencies and tourists.

At the same time as tourism increased, the "Norwegian Seafood Council" (NSC) was established in 1991. This is the fishing industry's own marketing company producing stories about the region's fishing culture. NSC is working together with the Norwegian seafood industry to increase the value of Norwegian seafood in new and established markets all over the world. Further, they contribute to safeguarding the reputation of Norwegian seafood with active and goal-oriented campaigns that are run together with different seafood companies, authorities, and the media. Several companies from the seafood industry are located in Lofoten.

"Stockfish from Lofoten" (TFL) an umbrella organisation of the stockfish producers in Lofoten, has determinedly worked to protect stockfish as a traditional product. In 2007 the product "Stockfish from Lofoten/tørrfisk fra Lofoten" received its first national Geographical Protected Designation. This was followed by receiving the EU's Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status in 2014. This designation comes with a set of stipulations to secure the origin of the product. TFL's main aim is to protect the PGI and develop markets based on the designation.

"When you are in Lofoten, you will always experience the taste of the region"<sup>3</sup> is a slogan from "LofotenMat BA", a member organisation with around 100 local producers that aims to make Lofoten a beacon of food culture and culinary experiences. They seek to profile Lofoten as a recognised food region and, in line with the NSC, contribute to increasing local value creation wi-

---

2 Viken & Granås 2016: 2.

3 Lofotenmat BA 2024. Translation by the authors.

thin fisheries, agriculture, and tourism. They do this through marketing and promotion of the products of their members, and through local distribution of products and upon external demand. LofotenMat ensures that food has a focus in the information guides of Visit Lofoten.

Marketing agencies have had a strong impact on how local food producers, tourist businesses and cultural organisations use marketing and storytelling tools as a method to “sell” a sense of place to their customers. Storytelling is an old technique that brings people together and keeps them engaged while building relationships. It does not matter where in the world you are from, the simple process of using a narrative aids communication with your audience. It is widely known that storytelling is a format that can mix fact or fiction. Some stories are factual in their core but embellished with fiction or improvised to strengthen the core message. To an audience, it is not always obvious how factual or fictive a story is.<sup>4</sup>

Locally, people have always been proud of their identity that is based particularly on the seasonal cod fisheries and associated stockfish production. Arctic cod is a wild species living at the top of the food chain. It migrates from the Barents Sea to the North-Norwegian coast, and in particular Lofoten, to spawn there every year in spring. The fish is caught by the coastal fishermen and delivered to a local buyer. The technique of turning the caught fish into stockfish can be traced back thousands of years. Two fish are tied together at the tail and hanged from wooden fish racks at carefully selected places to achieve the best drying condition in the cold and windy climate of Lofoten. The process takes about three months before the fish is taken down and put on pallets to post dry in traditional stockfish warehouses.<sup>5</sup> The weather combined with the migration of the Arctic cod and the cycles of the Atlantic currents, create a unique system that is embedded in the product. Once the fish is dried, it is preserved as a foodstuff for many years.

When marketing and branding processes developed, the richness of the stockfish story was understood, enhanced and utilised.<sup>6</sup> Elevating the stockfish as a story of a region's identity increased the need to offer stockfish as a foodstuff to visitors. Chefs, restaurants and kitchen managers needed to rediscover the stockfish as an ingredient that many visitors, especially from the Mediterranean

---

4 Koschorke 2018: 8.

5 Today some producers use indoor climate regulated solutions too.

6 Papacharalampous 2020: 97.

were familiar with, because stockfish had not been consumed locally but exported since the Middle Ages. It was a valuable trading good, too precious to eat, and fresh fish had always been available in coastal Norway all year round.

Additionally, the rise of a food identity based on an export product created incentives for stockfish producers to create new, convenient products. Soaked and ‘ready to eat’ stockfish products emerged serving two purposes: providing Norwegian consumers with convenient products available in supermarkets, as well as serving restaurants using these ready-made stockfish versions in their kitchens.<sup>7</sup> The increase in demand for more processed products is a direct consequence of the emergence of a regional food identity.

## A system of valorisation — Food heritagisation

In line with Fontefrancesco, Zocchi and Corvo we understand the concept of ‘food heritagisation’ as a socio-cultural process that is driven by agents who use the foods of a particular region and their associated cultures and traditions as a means to attach new values and get them recognised as part of a collective heritage. These agents, who can be locals or people coming into the region, can – and often have – an underlying agenda in this system of valorisation.<sup>8</sup>

Bessière describes food heritage as a living process where elements from the past are revitalised, adapted, and reinterpreted.<sup>9</sup> According to Fontefrancesco, Zocchi and Corvo these processes can be summarised in three stages.<sup>10</sup>

In the stage of **“heritage recognition”**, we have different actors coming together to recognise the importance of a food because of its heritage. They take actions to protect it.

Establishing concrete initiatives in a given geographical area, is the dynamic process by which individual or collective actors with a shared memory promote a common heritage project.<sup>11</sup>

---

7 Montalvan Castilla 2020: 24.

8 Fontefrancesco et al. 2022.

9 Bessière 1998: 27.

10 Fontefrancesco et al. 2022.

11 Bessière 1998: 29.

TFL is an example of a group of local stockfish producers coming together to recognise stockfish as a heritage food, to establish an interest group formally and work towards the protection of the food through PGI status.

The second stage is “**heritage legitimisation**” which describes a process of institutional acknowledgement. For this to happen, the food resources need to be defined within their tangible and intangible boundaries. Timothy and Ron describe this as “a mix of tangible (e.g. ingredients and cooking accoutrements) and intangible (e.g. tastes, smells, recipes and eating traditions) elements that contribute to the cultural values and characteristics of places”<sup>12</sup>, which make a foodstuff to be seen as genuine.

Certification and institutionalisation serve to legitimise food items, a process facilitated by entities such as the aforementioned tourism operators, destination companies, and museums. These institutions employ various tools like marketing, storytelling, historical interpretations, events, activities, and festivals to provide and reinforce this legitimacy. To operate effectively as a convincing mechanism, museums and similar bodies establish and reiterate narratives from the past, a practice integral to legitimising heritage. The concept of food heritagisation encapsulates this process, offering a definition of “providing consumers with the highest assurance regarding historical content, origins, and roots — key factors for a successful heritage market.”<sup>13</sup>

In Lofoten, common themes and storylines can be identified that are adapted for branding the tourism experience. The beauty of the rough arctic nature is combined with a rich coastal culture that has lasted for centuries and is still practiced and strong. People who live in this climate are tough and kind, a romanticisation that stems from harsh fishing conditions and dependencies from the land – a fishing-farming society that was living off the natural resources. Additionally, the image of a people that have connections to the world through Vikings and stockfish trade is promoted. These storylines are visible in marketing and promotion campaigns, in the landscapes of the fish racks and the quaint fishing villages that welcome tourists in reconstructed luxury fishing huts. Museums, guided heritage tours, galleries and local products strengthen and deepen this notion of a branded identity by repeating

---

12 Timothy et al. 2013: 99.

13 Bessière 1998: 28.

and deepening the storylines, providing ‘the proof’ of the tourism promise to the visitors of Lofoten.

The third stage is “**heritage valorisation**”, it entails the creation of new economic opportunities. Bessière points out that this can happen in particular in times of crisis, “if local authorities are experiencing an identity crisis and are discovering a new-found interest for their own gastronomy, heritage promotion may turn out to be profitable.”<sup>14</sup>

In Lofoten the process of food heritagisation is an adaptive phenomenon which aligns with the socio-economic development in the area. The turn towards tourism was a response to the economic recession of the early 1990s and an opportunity to capitalise on the people that were visiting the islands. Since then, the islands have been branding themselves by inventing new products and solidifying the underlying storylines. As Fitchett, Lindberg and Martin argue, tourism development underlines transformation processes of local practices, traditions and other aspects of social and economic life that contribute to the “commodification of a place”.<sup>15</sup>

Food systems have a particular place in such mechanisms because they respond to so many aspects of human life and culture.

Food is part of a physiological, psycho-sensorial, social and symbolic environment. [...] <sup>16</sup> By eating a so-called natural or traditional product, the eater seems to incorporate, in addition to nutritional and psycho-sensorial characteristics of the food, certain symbolic characteristics: one appropriates and embodies the nature, culture and identity of an area.<sup>17</sup>

People coming into the region become part of the place and its culinary identity. They want to understand the place and its culture. Food products on offer in local shops and restaurants, events like food festivals, cooking demonstrations, education offers or workshops allow tourist to integrate socially and culturally, enriching their experience.

---

14 Bessière 1998: 32.

15 Fitchett et al. 2021: 1.

16 Bessière 1998: 23.

17 Bessière 1998: 25.





Figure 1: Stockfish at the Norwegian Fishingvillage. Museum in Å. Foto: Museum Nord

## The museum – a place for shaping identity

Museums were originally created as bearers of history and keepsakes of heritage. They still have this role in society, but they are also much more. In recent times the definition of what a museum is has shifted towards a more active and engaged organisation that is “in the service of society [...], offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.”<sup>18</sup>

In the noughties in Norway, the museum operation was professionalised through consolidating existing museums into large umbrella organisations. In the Lofoten Islands, it is Museum Nord that operates today’s museums (except for a few private, self-funded museums). Tourism has provided a solid

---

18 ICOM 2023.

visitor base for museums in the region. In 2022, Museum Nord welcomed more than 260 000 visitors, circa half of them in the nine museums, units in Lofoten (Museum Nord 2023).

The professionalisation of the museum operation provided resources for joint branding, professional marketing and developing bespoke products for the tourism industry. Museums have been adapting to the tourist market proactively to increase own income which can be exemplified on the evolution of museum shops. This commercialisation of museums has, in certain venues, created a shift in perception from visitors to customers.

An example is the open-air museum “Lofotr Vikingmuseum”, which today is Northern Norway’s most visited museum.<sup>19</sup> The museum has created a variety of products and packages that have been customised to meet the needs of various regional and non-regional customer groups. In order to cater to these different groups, based on their level of interest in Viking heritage, they have collaborated with outdoor activity providers, tour operators, hotels, and camp sites both within and outside the Lofoten archipelago to develop unique products and packages.<sup>20</sup>

Despite a move towards commercialisation, people still perceive museums to be the bearers of the past – this means that they have the authority to create valid narratives. Museums among other cultural organisations are “the carer of the emotional aspects of regional identity”.<sup>21</sup> The factual and the emotional together are mechanisms for creating heritage identity. Paasi calls this the “affective element”<sup>22</sup> to connote how people relate to a place or a location and how they feel about it personally.

This means that museums have a role to play in how they are depicting the identity of a place, including its food identity. They do not do this in isolation but in response to the socio-economic circumstances around them. They need to balance how they tell different narratives to their audiences, both delivering on their social responsibility to provide a truthful and authentic story, whilst giving in to the more and more pressing needs of generating own income.

---

19 Torbergesen 2023:3.

20 Peter et al. 2010: 28.

21 Crosta and Vermehren 2019: 9.

22 Paasi 2002: 139.

Heritage must be legitimised in order to be genuine, i.e. giving the consumer a maximum guarantee of the historical content, origins and roots, which are the most important conditions for a successful heritage market. Some heritage or traditions may be misunderstood, misrepresented or may even be considered as genuinely inherited, when they are in fact recent artificial constructions void of any historical substance.<sup>23</sup>

Museums are understood to be genuine and therefore provide a guarantee for the historical content they disseminate.

## How museums create culinary narratives

Many museums display interpretation about food in their exhibitions and activities because food is such an integral part of human culture and everyday life.

Food is central to our sense of identity. The way any given human group eats helps it assert its diversity, hierarchy and organization, and at the same time, both its oneness and the otherness of whoever eats differently.<sup>24</sup>

Most prominently we find references to food consumption and culinary culture in regional museums, heritage centres and outdoor museums. For example, at “Lofotmuseet” and “Skaftnes gård” in Lofoten the tables are set with fine tableware, and an insight into the kitchen shows the public how food was prepared in a wealthy household. This allows people to reflect on today’s commodities, the accessibility of ingredients and differences of class in food culture. How deliberately are such displays curated by the museum to convey food culture? And: How are they understood by the public as an interpretation of food culture? While these questions are too extensive for this article, we assume that food displays in museums add to a basic understanding of the food produced and consumed in a place and time period.

At “Lofotr Vikingmuseum” food eaten in the Viking age can be found in the reconstructed longhouse as part of a display. The active heritage farm that sur-

---

23 Bessière 1998: 28.

24 Fischler 1988: 275.

rounds the house pays tribute to farming practices and animal stocks of the early medieval period. In addition, the museum offers a Viking Feast to tourist groups nearly every day of the year. At the feast participants are drawn into a fictitious scene that is acted out as a short play. As part of this, the guests eat a meal from wooden plates and drink mead. This popular product is sold as an experience. The museum carefully considers choices of ingredients and food preparation based on today's knowledge about Viking food culture. In 2022, the museum produced more than 10 000 meals, mainly for cruise tourists that were brought to the museum in busses.<sup>25</sup> The product is a construct of a representation of something that is believed to have been, adapted to a particular market. It is communicating a clear story of life in the Viking age – whether authentic or not.

Hanging the Arctic cod outdoors in the winter months to produce stockfish creates a landscape of drying racks and smells that are distinctive for the region. This heritage landscape adds to the tourism experience, creating a natural desire to understand more about this food source and culture while travelling through the region.

Museum Nord has used Arctic cod as a protagonist to build a new thematic museum for the seasonal Lofoten fisheries, called “SKREI”<sup>26</sup>. The museum is under development and will be opened in 2026. Its concept includes food both as a historical theme as well as a commercial opportunity. The visitor will be offered different cod products to taste in the restaurant, activities like cookery events, fishing and preparation activities or tasting sessions.

Heritage food as income generation can be found in several other places, such as at the “Norsk fiskeværsmuseum” which is famous for its cinnamon buns. The cinnamon bun is a common, popular Norwegian bakery good that is sold in bakeries all across the country. Interestingly, the bakery that is part of the museum has not produced these buns traditionally. They were added as a product for the tourist market when the museum started operating.

Museums play a valuable role in extending our understanding of how food systems have changed over time. Depicting ‘life in the past’ in a museum means that food is contextualised in a broader cultural context. Specific themed museums focus on specific foodstuff within their wider cultural context. They convey defined storylines about food and offer commercial opportunities for museums.

---

25 Museum Nord 2023: 5.

26 “Skrei” means Arctic cod in Norwegian and refers to ‘the wanderer’.

## Discussion

Above the Arctic Circle food production conditions are impacted highly by the seasons and the climate. The growing season is short, marine resources are abundant but harvesting conditions are tough and highly regulated. This means that the costs of producing local food often in small volumes is high, and producers are restricted to compete in a monopolised market.

Aalan gård, an organic goat farm, is for example selling hand-made cheeses, herbs and teas. They are not bulk products but specialised add-ons for the local cuisine, or souvenirs for the tourist market.

For small producers like Aalan gård, food heritagisation is an opportunity to stand out, to create products that have an added value and can therefore get a higher price which enables these producers to exist. LofotenMat represents such local producers and strengthens their place in the market. In turn, this challenges the established distribution of highly monopolised companies. Museums play an active role in taking the products into their museum shops and outlets, promoting local produce as specialities from the region.

Tourists are more and more aware of the food they consume and have developed a growing preference for traditional cuisines and natural products. For urban tourists, consuming local products may not only indicate superior quality but also allow them to assume a rural identity, symbolically immersing themselves in an unknown culture. Modern consumers want food items to communicate information about their origin, preparation, and identity through proper labelling. Adequate labelling provides a sense of assurance and comfort by offering insights into the history, identity, and nature of a product. Needless to say, advertising and marketing professionals are manipulating consumers on many occasions by falsely presenting products as homemade or farm-fresh, when they are actually mass-produced.<sup>27</sup>

For small producers this means that they benefit from “heritagising” their products. If they invest in branding, design, promotion and certification, it provides them with opportunities for increased revenues. Understanding and targeting the consumer is key. Åalan Gård for example invites customers for farm visits, selling an experience while also gaining an insight into what sells.

---

27 Bessière 1998: 24.

Food heritagisation uses storytelling as a means. This has its challenges. Stories about the heritage of food might omit key elements, simplify complex contexts, might romanticise the past or produce artificial truths or assumptions about the heritage of a region. In the case of Lofoten, we have mentioned the romanticisation of dried cod often omitting the hardship and the loss of lives at sea, the selling of 'traditional' cinnamon buns at the Norwegian Fishing Village Museum at Å or the enacted authenticity of the Viking feast at Lofotr Vikingmuseum as examples.

While tourists might be unknowingly misled by the curated narratives created around products, local consumers see products as 'for tourists', not affordable and niche. On the one hand, they feel that local products should be affordable for locals, on the other hand, expensive local products that look nice and tell interesting stories, create local pride.

Stockfish had not been consumed locally prior to the boom in tourism in the 1990s, except for special occasions. Still today, the biggest part of produced stockfish consumed in Norway is prepared as 'Lutefisk', a traditional Christmas dish that is first mentioned by Olaus Magnus in 1555.<sup>28</sup> Since stockfish products have entered the gastronomy and the supermarket shelves as pre-soaked convenience products, local people have become more interested in stockfish as a foodstuff also for home consumption. The professionalisation of marketing and branding products has led to closer cooperation and better promotion of local food, giving it value also locally. It diversifies the local diet and connects Lofoten internationally because many recipes that use soaked stockfish are inspired by international cuisines.

For cultural organisations, the challenge lies in being a mediator. On the one hand, cultural organisations like museums support the local producers and have a key interest in tourism and commercialisation themselves due to an increasing dependence on own income, on the other hand they are trying to stay true to their role as bearers of cultural knowledge with a responsibility to tell diverse, balanced and factual histories, countering the simplification of narratives and the omission of facts.

An example is SKREI, where Museum Nord is planning to tell the history of the Lofoten cod fisheries from different perspectives: the marine biology of the Arctic cod, the culture of the fisheries, the birthplace of cod trade in the

---

28 Riddervold 1990: 23.

Middle Ages, the management of fish stocks from the past to the future, and more. These perspectives underpin the knowledge and culture around Arctic cod as a foodstuff. SKREI will also offer culinary experiences, combining Arctic cod, local produce and the influences of the codfish cuisine that international trade has created. If SKREI will be executed as planned, this means that the attraction will function as an amplifier of the legitimisation of foods, in particular Arctic cod, that in turn increases its value. SKREI will communicate how we can live together with the cod-fish in the future.<sup>29</sup> In the age of the climate crisis the museum creates new narratives that show possibilities for sustainability and regeneration. If this is done in collaboration and as part of the tourism system, the museum believes to achieve a shift in perception followed by action.

An increase in income through commercial activities gives these actors more agency to act and to innovate. Museum Nord has, for example, used own income to develop and produce new interpretation for their visitors. The organisation has been building several new museums in the region in the past 10 years. Hurtigrutemuseum was opened in 2021, SKREI is under development, a new museum is planned in Sortland, but also smaller places with less tourism, like Bø museum, Melbu hovedgård or Andøymuseet benefit from the opportunities that are largely created through Museum Nord's own income. These renewals of heritage storytelling enhance and amplify the identity of the region, providing knowledge-based interpretation created by heritage professionals that support the legitimisation of heritage.

## Conclusion

On the example of the Lofoten Islands, we have demonstrated that collaboration between tourism actors, local producers and cultural agencies have the power to create a food heritage and identity that is meaningful and valorised. This leads to higher consumption of local foods, higher income for producers, an increase of local food production and an increase in local-loop systems. In addition, food heritagisation has an impact on the local market, we perceive a pride in local products, and the emergence of new products that are also consumed locally.

---

<sup>29</sup> Expology and Museum Nord 2023.

Tourists who visit the region are eager to immerse themselves in the local culture and culinary scene. Local shops and restaurants showcase a wide range of food products to cater to their preferences. Additionally, food festivals, cooking demonstrations, educational opportunities, and workshops are available, enabling tourists to foster social and cultural integration while enriching their overall experience.

We have used the example of several museums to show how a professional heritage sector can safeguard – or at least support – the truthfulness of narratives that are used commercially in the promotion of products to locals and tourists. Museums play an essential role in expanding our knowledge of the evolution of food systems throughout history. By presenting a portrayal of “life in the past,” museums place food within a larger cultural framework, providing valuable context. Some museums focus on specific food themes, highlighting their cultural significance. Along with telling captivating food stories, these themed museums also offer potential commercial prospects for the museums themselves. Museums are understood to be genuine and therefore provide a guarantee for the historical content they disseminate.

When using the mechanisms on how food heritagisation is created well – not abusing the power to create fake narratives – the actors in a food heritagisation cycle can produce engaging experiences that support local people and local food consumption.

Our research and the process of writing this paper has led us to new considerations and further questions to explore. We ask ourselves, for example, why stockfish has survived as a product? ‘Klippfisk’, the salted and dried Arctic cod, is much easier and cheaper to produce. Since the technology developments that enabled freezing and shipping fish of the last century, stockfish trade has been heavily challenged by the export of fresh and frozen cod.<sup>30</sup> Can we assume that it is surviving on the local traditions and the traditions of our export markets, namely Italy, Nigeria, Croatia, UK, USA and others?

## Declaration of competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests in this paper. As employees of Museum Nord, they have a personal relationship

---

<sup>30</sup> Hovland 2014: 217-219.



to the topic, and declare that they are therefore not impartial. Their perspective, however, provides an insight into the organisation and the heritage and tourism sector on the Lofoten Islands. This paper has an exploratory character.

## Bibliography

- Bessière, Jacinthe (1998). "Local Development and Heritage: Traditional Food and Cuisine as Tourist Attractions in Rural Areas". In *Sociologia Ruralis*. European Society for Rural Sociology: 21-34.
- Crosta, Camilla and Vermehren, Anna Insa (2019). "European Cooperation Projects and the Challenges of Representing Local Cultural Identities: The Case of SKREI Convention." *Nordic Conference on Cultural Policy Research, Iceland*.
- Expology; Museum Nord (2023). "SKREI Manusunderlag" (unpublished).
- Fischler, Claude (1988). "Food, self and identity". In *Social Science Information*, 27(2), 275-292.
- Fitchett, James, Frank Lindberg and Martin, Diane M. (2021). "Accumulation by Symbolic Dispossession: Tourism Development in Advanced Capitalism". *Annals of Tourism Research* vol. 86 (January), 103072.
- Fontefrancesco, Michele, Zocchi, Dauro Mattia and Corvo, Paolo (2022). "Food Heritage". Scholarly Community Encyclopedia. <https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/13876> (accessed on 13 February 2024)
- Hovland, Edgar (2014). «De harde 20-årene». In N. Kolle (ed.). *Norges fiskeri- og kysthistorie III*. Fagbokforlaget.
- ICOM (2023). "Museum Definition". International Council of Museums. <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/> (accessed on 13 February 2024).
- Koschorke, Albrecht (2018). *Fact and Fiction: Elements of a General Theory of Narrative*. Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.
- «Lofotenmat BA» (2023). <https://www.lokalmat.no/produsenter-liste/produsentnetverk/lofotenmat/> (accessed on 15 February 2024).
- Montalvan Castilla and Johanna Evelyn (2020). "The role of stockfish in local food security: traditional knowledge, transmission and change in Lofoten, Norway". In K. Hossain, L.M. Nielsson and T.M. Herrmann (ed.), *Food Security in the High North: Contemporary Challenges Across the Circumpolar Region*. London: Routledge: 15-33.
- Montanari, Massimo and Sonnenfeld, Albert (2006). *Food Is Culture*. Columbia University Press. JSTOR <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/mont13790> (accessed on 13 February 2024).
- Museum Nord (2023). 'Museum Nord Årsrapport 2022'. Museum Nord. <https://www.museumnord.no/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Museum-Nord-Arsrapport-2022.pdf> (accessed on 16 February 2024).

- Paasi, Anssi (2002). "Bounded Spaces in the Mobile World: Deconstructing 'Regional Identity'". In M.B. Aalbers, I. van Liempt and M. van Meeteren (eds.) *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 93 (2): 137–48.
- Papacharalampous, Nafsika (2020). "Is Skrei a Historical Norwegian Figure?: The Nomadic Symbiosis of Fish and Humans in the Lofoten Islands". In A. Aronsson, F. Holm e M. Kaul (eds.) *Relations: Beyond Anthropocentrism*. 8: 97-114.
- Peter, Leonie (2010). "Creating Products for Tourism – the Example of Lofotr Viking Museum". In *euroREA. Journal for (Re)Construction and Experiment in Archaeology* 7–2010: 27–29.
- Riddervold, Astrid (1990). *Lutefisken, rakefisken og silder i norsk tradisjon*. Novus forlag.
- Timothy, Dallen and Amos, Ron (2013). "Understanding Heritage Cuisines and Tourism: Identity, Image, Authenticity, and Change". In *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 8 (May): 99–104.
- Torbergsen, Elin T. (2023). «Digital formidling fra et brukerperspektiv. En analyse av digitale formidlingsmetoder ved Lofotr Vikingmuseum på Borg i Lofoten» (manuskript submitted for publication: Nordisk Museologi).
- Viken, Arvid and Granås, Brynhild (2014). *Tourism Destination Development: Turns and Tactics*. Routledge.