



## Episode 1:

# Consumer trends shaping eating out

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**Voiceover:** You're listening to the Fáilte Ireland Inside Tourism Business Podcast, the definitive podcast for tourism operators, bringing you expert advice, insights and practical tools to help you navigate the challenges your business is facing.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** My name is Ruth Hegarty. And I'm your host for the first series of Fáilte Ireland's new podcast, where we delve inside food examining trends, innovations, and tackling costs, to help you run a leaner more successful food operation.

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Welcome to episode one of Inside Tourism Business, where we will start the series by looking at how consumer trends are shaping eating out. I'm delighted to be joined by Joe Quinn, hospitality management consultant specialising in hotel operations management. Chef and food consultant, Niall Hill and Amanda Horan, Manager Enterprise Development at Fáilte Ireland. Welcome all, thank you for joining us today.

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**Amanda Horan:** Hi Ruth.

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**Joe Quinn:** Thank you Ruth.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** So, it's been a hugely challenging time for the industry over the past year. We're all well aware of that. We certainly have seen incredible levels of adaptation and innovation but that hasn't been possible for everyone and the tourism sector is still facing some really challenging times ahead. Joe if I can start with you, what are the major impacts on the industry and where do you feel the industry is at right now?

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**Joe Quinn:** Thank you Ruth. Well, I think in three words, the industry right now is on its knees. If you look at occupancy in Irish hotels, you know, for the year ending December 2020, it was circa 70% lower than in 2019 and RevPARs.

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That's revenue per available room was down about 80%. Also, if you consider that I suppose in the hospitality sector there is circa 250,000 people employed. If you look at the numbers right now in excess of 150 people have been laid off, unfortunately. So yeah, it's in pretty poor shape, but I have to say, you know, I think there's light at the end of the tunnel.

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I have been involved in the industry for 40 years now and I've seen a lot of ups and downs, but this has been far the worst, but as I say there is light. I think if people use the time wisely now when hopefully we'll open May, June time we should reap the benefits and the rewards.

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So, if you think of our industry, you know, it's a great industry when it's running well, it's worth about 9 billion to the economy. I don't think those days are too far again. If we, if we play it right.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** Amanda, why has Fáilte Ireland got involved in creating this podcast series?

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**Amanda Horan:** Thanks Ruth. Well, I suppose for us 2020 saw food operations working at a really frenetic pace to pivot through experience under the new operating guidelines. As you said, there was lots of innovation. Some of it brought success, but equally there was a lot of challenges and some of those challenges still exist there.

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We know that some businesses are actually, you know, working to drive sales, but really maybe haven't had a chance to get under the bonnet and understand if actually there is profit in what they're trying to do. So now that we're in level five, you know, still in quarter one 2021 and nobody would have wished this on the industry, but there is actually an opportunity here now to reflect and to be more strategic in how we plan for 2021.

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We have new insights now with things we know now that we didn't know last year, new consumer lifestyle trends, new customer segments and market segments to reach out to, new ways to look at profitability on what's working and what's not. New supports and labour costs and food costs tools that we've built to help people in that regard.

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So, the podcast for us offers an opportunity to support businesses to reflect, to take stock, to be more strategic and through these bite-size conversations on insights, tips and advice with subject experts and practitioners really will help people consider how to get it right this year, how to plan to be more sustainable in the long-term.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** Great and you mentioned those, those consumer trends that Fáilte Ireland has been looking into and that's what we're diving into in, in episode one of the series today. So, Joe, can you talk to us a little bit about what are some of those broad consumer trends and behaviour changes that we're seeing post-COVID?

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**Joe Quinn:** The first one I really see is this business about home holidays, mini breaks, you know, staycations, domestic tourism, and whatever you'd call it. International travel tourism will not really recover until next year, so I think the focus is really going to be on domestic business. You know, we saw it last year, particularly in the regions where there was quite high occupancies June through September, October. Highest 70, 80%.

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I think that the pent-up demand would be a key driver, you know, and what I would regard will be a very long season from June to December with high demand. So, it's important that business, you know, that's our scale up ready to be, you know, there for a very rewarding and busy time.

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You can see that advanced bookings are really evident nationwide. Another trend I see is this business of, of safety and enhanced hygiene protocols. I feel it's critical and, you know, the feeling that one is safe and that the hotel is really caring about, you know, your health and your safety.

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You know, it's one thing saying it, but there's another thing actually living it and I think there'll be a little persuasion to be done here, you know, they say the business are led in three, three ways, they're either energy led, cost led or, you know, service led and I think after COVID, you know, a lot of businesses are gonna be safety led.

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Another trend emerging, and now developing faster than ever is that people will be more open to new technologies in hotels. For example, you know, self-check-ins/checkouts, guest, bedroom access via smartphone, touchless technology and food and beverage apps. And I think more than ever, there is an opportunity for hospitality providers, you know, to innovate and invest in digital technology.

[00:06:06] And I suppose it's trying to find a balance, the right balance between technology based service and human interaction and interface.

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I also see working remotely now and what, you know, with legislation now imminent, which will allow people to work remotely and given the emergency and trends by many of the multi corporates, which see the majority of their workforces right now, you know, working from home and for the foreseeable future, not to mention, you know, the travel saving costs.

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There is an opportunity now presents itself for some operators to adapt space for alternative use such as office space, you know, with the right tools to do the job. It also allows for upselling and food and beverage offerings. I also think online off sales particularly around food, you know, for, for those to go collect and delivery, you know, people are socialising, they're working, they're shopping and they're entertaining online more now than ever.

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And the age profile is getting wider. So, you know, getting used to the idea of shopping online is clearly evidence that the retail sector and food plays a big part. So, a great, great opportunity for hotels who are, you know, they're properly set up, particularly in the urban areas, which have good reputations for food, you know, to develop off sales products and distribution.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** Yeah, and I suppose as you say, lots of things that the industry really needs to be watching and responding to lots of opportunity there. So, I suppose Niall when it comes then to the, to the food side of things, what, what do you see as the emerging consumer trends that industry need to be aware of and maybe adapting to?

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**Niall Hill:** What I see Ruth is customer's food preferences are very different now compared to 12 months ago, I really see an increase in health and wellness with a real emphasis on nutrition has really come to the forefront and in particular, in relation to mood foods I think people were feeling anxiety and you know, you were looking at Omega3s and how can they incorporate them into their diets.

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There's also, I've also seen a real increase in pro and prebiotics in recipe development. You know, our chefs are really having a look at how they can, how they can incorporate some of these ingredients to make their dishes really healthy.

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And I think that's what I've seen from a chef's perspective in relation to what's happening with COVID. People are looking for more nutritious and safe food.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** And I know that Fáilte Ireland have been doing quite extensive research around consumer and industry trends, both at home and abroad and Niall the emphasis on local and the desire to support local really is stronger than ever, isn't it?

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**Niall Hill:** Absolutely. I really see that where the trends are going is chefs supporting the local community and local suppliers, because I guess their producers and suppliers are, are, are hurting like every other business, they have they've an excess of produce.

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So, I think that's really coming to the forefront in developing seasonal menus, but it's also initiating innovation. When you're working through the seasons, you've gotta be a little bit more creative, and with, with that in mind it's also really pushing the nutrition element because what's in season is always best to eat and chefs really have to adapt their menus in line with what's happening out there.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** And Amanda I mentioned that research that Fáilte Ireland has undertaken. I know it's been quite in-depth. What are some of the key trends that the really important ones that have been identified?

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**Amanda Horan:** Yeah, Ruth well, I suppose just for anybody who's interested that full research is available on our Fáilte Ireland site and on our COVID hub. So, I would really encourage everybody to look at it there, it's very digestible in how it's presented. But some key top line things just to call out on that as Niall and Joe have alluded to dining preferences and patterns are changing as our lifestyle changes and that's affecting how people engage with takeaway services. We see those for example, you know, before COVID about 30% of Irish consumers engage with those. That's now up at 71% and probably influenced by the fact that we don't have much other options.

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But there is a feeling that in actual fact that will remain quite strong post-COVID when we get into vaccine levels and are able to move about again, but 15% of that market is now serviced by restaurants. So that's quite a change. Equally outside dining, I know we're going to talk about that in a moment, but really interesting here to see the willingness of the consumer to eat outside right through the seasons. Then there's also new opportunities coming through the research in terms of, you know, food and drink such as picnics, food to go.

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The whole idea of care packages and food featuring as a part of that care packages, and also then within the technology as Joe has alluded to, you know, there's actually quite an acceptance in that assuming it's not going to lose the personal service. Then the whole area of click and collect, I mean 73% likely to continue with that opportunity and use that service after the COVID pandemic has eased with the vaccine program.

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So, loads of insights Ruth, loads of opportunity to actually identify where you can grow revenues and channels. And I know we'll kind of get into some of that conversation now.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** Yeah, so as you say, all of, all of that research available on the Fáilte Ireland COVID-19 Support Hub, and so let's dive in a little bit to, to some of those new dining opportunities and those changes that you've mentioned and I suppose the, the one to start with probably is the first meal of the day, breakfast.

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We know the hotel sector as, as Joe explained, it has been hugely impacted, and of course, breakfast is one of the areas that has seen huge change. Joe to come to you first on that, what are some of the big challenges now around breakfast and some of the potential solutions that hotels might consider?

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**Joe Quinn:** Yeah, there's quite a few Ruth but the biggest impact is having to deal with, you know, this business of social distancing, you know, hotels and restaurants by their nature, they were never designed for social distancing. So, you know, being creative on how your ground floor is set up as important.

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You know, if you take for example, a hundred-seater restaurant, one metre distancing will reduce that hundred seats to 67 seats. If you were to extend it to two metres, you're down to about 45 seats, which is a great reduction.

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And as I said earlier, you know, because of the pent-up demand nearly all hotels I think when they open will be, you know, will be driving high occupancies into the nineties for a good period of time.

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And that means that for, there will be many guests who will want to, you know, avail of breakfast and the pinch point will be to be able to serve those people safely. So, planning your ground floor space and, you know, to realign key areas, bars, lounges, lobbies restaurants, I think has got to be very important and hotels will adapt and you know, they're resilient. They're already thinking about this anyway.

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Room service to me will be much more prominent, and you know, developing easy to transport products and services to guestrooms will no doubt help. I think the packaging, you know, and the presentation is very important and I think people will use this facility now because it becomes appealing and it'll also take pressure off ground floor.

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I think the whole area of the buffet set up you know, is really under threat. You know if you look at it, the Intercontinental hotels who have 6,000 sites worldwide, they've stripped out the breakfast buffets and replaced with a-la-carte. And look, I do know that every hotel in Ireland has some sort of buffet setup, some very elaborate. They've been very effective in serving breakfast over many decades. And it was always seen as the most labour cost-effective way to do that.

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But self-service buffets will no longer be acceptable. You know, people will not be comfortable using them, so, so there has to be - some will be removed, others will be adapted for display, you know

storage areas or even to dispense counters for, for waiting staff to dispense food, to, to breakfast guests.

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I think that clear instructions for customer journeys through service areas, one-way systems, you know, clear direction and signs and an order of work for service personnel that minimise face-to-face interaction, I think would be important. Just on the pinch point, I mean there are things that can be done to alleviate it. Like for example, allocated times for breakfast, allocated spaces for breakfast.

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So, it might not always be the restaurant. It might be the lounge, it might be a nook or cranny, it might be a lobby area and then extended breakfast hours. And I know Niall would probably touch on this a little bit more, but all-day dining could come into play.

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And I think as the business makes between June and December would predominantly be leisure breakfast throughout. So, I think people will have more time to lounge about. So, I think there are some key changes that we're going to see in the next you know, when we open in June.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** Yeah, so no doubt lots of operational and service changes required there and a big rethink really to how breakfast is done.

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What about the food side of it? Niall as Joe said the soft service buffet, which is really the traditional format in most hotels is, gone for now. So how can hotels approach breakfast, make it a bit more efficient, make it profitable?

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**Niall Hill:** Yeah, yeah Ruth, I think you know, as Joe touched on there like buffets are, are no longer a real viable option for businesses.

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I think the approach we have to take is the a-la-carte breakfast, but you know, historically breakfast has always been, it's been big enough to start from the chef's perspective, but I see this as a real opportunity to change that. It should be given the same emphasis to breakfast as they would lunch and dinner.

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I think an opportunity that arises is current global trends in plant forward thinking and plant forward based cuisine and these don't lend these usually don't really lend themselves to a buffet setting, but they do lend themselves to being finished to order, repeat plated up and I think this from, from a cost point of view was, is, is really a good strategic move as well, because you know, you've plant protein in there, you've no protein.

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So obviously your dish is going to be a lot cheaper and we're going to touch on food costs later on in the series, but I, I just feel it's a real opportunity for chefs to shine. Also, what it does is it helps them control their food costs as well and with Joe, what Joe said about you know, allocated times you know, this also has a knock-on effect with your labour costs as well.

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But I think one of the strategies to really do is to have a look when you look at your breakfast menu is, is to really kind of link that to other, other dishes within your other offerings. So, you can all, you're always driving a lean business and you have cross-functional ingredients, so you're reducing your labour costs all the time, but that's where I see it going.

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But I also see a real uptake on to-go breakfasts as well. It's a real opportunity, possibly which businesses the likes of hotels never had before.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** Yeah, and Amanda as we mentioned earlier that you've been involved in Fáilte Ireland creating a, a breakfast toolkit, which really gets into a lot of detail on some of these areas that Joe and Niall have been talking about.

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**Amanda Horan:** Yeah, absolutely. I suppose, you know, the problem we were trying to help address within the toolkit is this whole area of, you know, that Joe and Niall has alluded to a), you know, how to do it effectively, how to service the volumes we're doing with less space and looking at those challenges and looking at service flow challenges.

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And then actually within that, you know, when you pivot off a buffet and you start to create a table service menu, we actually need to start thinking about it differently it's not a matter of translating the buffet menu onto a table service menu, but actually this is an opportunity to be really innovative and to look at menu re-engineering that makes sense for, you know healthier lifestyle and breakfast preferences.

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But also, opportunities to upsell and drive, you know, food margins in that way as well. And there's been a whole host of, you know hotel consumers over the years have been kind of maybe, not selecting the B&B inclusive rate and choosing to go a room-only rate.

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I think there's real opportunity now with the a-la-carte menu to actually entice some of those back, they may not have wanted a full end-to-end buffet breakfast service, but they wanted maybe one or two healthy items. And then a-la-carte really allows them kind of do that as well. So again, huge opportunities for sales, but to Joe's point earlier then how you service that in reduced capacities, we've looked in the toolkit about how to innovate in that whole, you know, breakfast service to the room and maybe the whole idea of a more continental, local produce, breakfast baskets, that's almost like a breakfast picnic to your room.

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And if you're catering for more of your customers in your room, then it leaves you more space in the dining room to cater for the others or equally even to start to look outside of your resident guests and to see how you can entice in, locals or people coming into meetings or areas like that as well.

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So, throughout the toolkit, I mean there's eight sections in the toolkit and we've looked at everything from the trends, informing menu design, how to re-engineer menus and cost them to be more profitable, looking at the culture of introducing and upselling.

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And training in upselling to teams within, within businesses and how to re-imagine room service breakfast, as well as looking at opportunities for the, you know, food to go. So those corporate guests even when the domestic markets when they start to return, how do you better service them so they don't just take a room only, but you give them a very handy, breakfast to-go bag as they walk out the door and it saves some driving, you know, down the road and into a corner shop or a, or, or a food court to pick up the breakfast, which actually you can easily serve them as they go.

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So, they're all areas that we've covered in the toolkit loads of tools in there - templates, calculators for labour costing and food costing as well as how to build SOPs and some inspiration as well, for new food menus.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** Okay, we'll be right back after a quick break to hear about some Fáilte Ireland supports.

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**Voiceover:** Fáilte Ireland's new breakfast toolkit contains expert advice and practical tools that are applicable to all areas of food and service. You can find the breakfast toolkit and more helpful supports and guidance on the operational performance section under Strategic F&B operations on our COVID-19 Business Support Hub at [FáilteIreland.ie](https://www.failteireland.ie)

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**Ruth Hegarty:** So, moving on I might stick with you Amanda, Joe spoke earlier about the need to really use all the spaces available to you, you know, when your hotel is at full capacity or you're really trying to maximise business during the busy summer months. One of the areas that everyone will be looking to, if they have it available is, is outdoor dining.

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I know this has come through strongly in the consumer insights research that Fáilte Ireland had done that people really are willing and want to dine outside.

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**Amanda Horan:** Absolutely Ruth, I suppose what really maybe surprised some people within the research, and as I said, it's fully available on the Fáilte Ireland hub and on the Fáilte Ireland website to download and study at your leisure.

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But you know, 55% of consumers have eaten outdoors now since last March. And a lot of that is driven by the need to feel safer, the desire for fresh air and ventilation probably, you know, influenced a little bit by COVID concerns and equally the desire to use outside because there's a feeling that there's better social distancing available, but it doesn't come without the caveat of the fact that they do want to feel warm and dry.

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So, weatherproofing will be important, but I think, you know the question was really was this a fad or a short-term trend influenced by COVID, but actually fact what when we dug into the research, there's actually a willingness and an appetite to eat outside year-round. So, 91%, you know saying they would eat out in spring 97% in summer 87% in autumn, but a staggering 55% still looking to do that throughout the winter provided we have the appropriate and cover and support from the wind and the rain.



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And I think that what's interesting about that is, you know, Ireland probably has been slow, in regard to this, as opposed to other European markets and we tend to think of, you know, the likes of the warmer Mediterranean climates that are really good at outdoor dining, but I think we need to start to think like Scandinavia. Scandinavia have been doing this for years and I know when I visited, I was fascinated to find I could have a very comfortable meal in the middle of winter with very minus degree temperatures and snow on the ground up there.

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But actually, I was sitting on a chair that was warm because it was properly lined. I had heaters above my head. I had wind protection and it was a really refreshing and comfortable experience. So much fun. I'd say actually, you know, I think I found my taste buds were more you know, accelerated by the fact that I was consuming it with fresh air, you know, in, in my lungs as well.

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So, I think these are all important insights Ruth and really point to the fact that, you know for businesses now that are thinking about how do they optimise those outdoor spaces for 2021 and beyond this may be an area that's a longer-term investment then than you may have thought last year.

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I think it's really important that those menus are thought through to work for outdoor dining spaces. So outdoor dining, that's going to make sense in terms of how is my food going to be kept warm. So, the vessels I'm using is really important, but equally as well, what's the distance between my outdoor spaces and the kitchen.

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And how does that reflect itself in, in the way that the menu is offered? And the other thing coming through from our research is that the preferences is for cross season dining outdoors, which is more casual and light bites and snacks. And so, things like, you know, the idea maybe of an experience that is maybe a dessert in a cocktail, or it is, you know, a casual light bite and a glass of nice, nice wine with a friend.

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So, these are all things to consider. When we start to look at outdoor dining.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** Absolutely and I think you're right Amanda I mean, I think we all know from barbecues and picnics and everything, sometimes food just tastes better when you're outdoors and you have, that lovely atmosphere.

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And as you say you know, I remember being in Copenhagen in the, in the springtime and it was still very cold in fact there was a bit of snow around, I mean, nearly every restaurant or cafe had some tables outside and whether it was hot water bottles, blankets, heaters and of course people were also dressed to be outdoors and they had their big warm coats on and they're more than happy to stay outside. So, I suppose it's creating that culture.

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**Joe Quinn:** Yeah, and as I say Ruth you know there's no such thing as poor weather, but there is such a thing as poor clothing. So, it's how you dress.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** Exactly Joe, when I suppose in terms of preparing for outdoor dining and the, and the setup what, what do you, what should places be considering now and thinking about in advance of the re-opening?

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**Joe Quinn:** Yeah, a huge opportunity, you know, if you think about it, you know, when the smoking ban was first introduced to this country, we were one of the first, we were very innovative and there are many fine examples around the country, how well these spaces were developed. And I think similarly spaces for outdoor dining can be developed very well.

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You know, you've got to take into consideration where the, where the kitchen is. But I think Niall you know, we were talking about this earlier and, you know, to have an outdoor barbecue and to tailor your menu that, you know, you're not, you're not transporting food great distances that and I think people are fully accepting of that, but it's all, it's all about clever design.

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Well laid out spaces well lit, well heated, heated lamps and, you know, well sheltered for breezes and that, and I think we'll see a huge upsurge in that. So, it's just taking a little bit of level two thinking I call it so that you can really plan properly but it's beginning to happen already as Amanda and Niall earlier alluded to so great opportunity. Yeah.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** And Niall I mean if people have the outdoor space available, you know it seems obvious that they should use us, but I mean it needs to be they need to be able to do that in a way that is efficient and viable and profitable and that they can serve us properly and deliver quality. So, what should people be considering around their setup and the kind of food that they might serve outdoors?

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**Niall Hill:** First of all Ruth I mean I love outdoor dining. I just think it's wonderful to eat out. But my first advice would be to really keep the concept simple, we're looking at you know what food works outside? So, as you alluded to like barbecues work really well, food truck like building a pizza oven, like, I mean the heat from a pizza oven alone would just, just create that sense of warmth.

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But like, you know, you don't even have to do pizzas in the oven. It could be, it could be roasting chicken. You can be doing anything you want, but my advice would be to really kind of keep it simple, and I think outdoor dining in particular, it won't can't really be structured as a starter main course and dessert is going to be a one dish. So, my advice would be to keep that concept simple work on the quality of what you're doing and do it really well.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** Great and I know we'll talk a little bit more about that in the next episode, when we're focusing in, on menu engineering. But Niall stay, staying with you, something that we mentioned earlier is the trend around all-day dining, and I suppose the different dining opportunities throughout the day and maybe change in patterns as to when people want to, to eat now. And I mean, that's something that has emerged over recent years, it's been around for a while, but how, how was COVID likely to, to influence that and what do businesses need to be thinking about it?

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**Niall Hill:** Yeah, we'll definitely see all-day dining menus evolving this year. I think they're going to get better. You know, they're not going to be an afterthought. You have a look at work schedules at the moment they're changing all the time, and as a result of the traditional lunch break between 1pm and

2pm was pretty much gone and an all-day dining option is a great viable option for customers on different schedules.

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So, you kind of have to nearly kind of bring your almost breakfast and lunch and dinner into your all-day dining and kind of cater for that because you don't know whether somebody wants, you know, a breakfast at, you know 12 o'clock because of their schedules. However, you know, for this to work in the kitchen needs to really simplify this and needs to bring in ingredients and dishes that are cross-functional.

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They're also kind of tying with your dinner takeaway and delivery menus because these are other areas that businesses are looking at now. So, they're looking at, you know, that takeaway option that click and collect and they're also looking at the delivery as well. So, you need to be smart, you need to also continue to drive efficiency so that it's not overloaded on the kitchen.

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But it's also worth noting that the dietary trend of intermittent fasting, which, which traditionally skips breakfast definitely falls into this category, and it's a really good opportunity for businesses to tap into it.

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**Ruth Hegarty:** Okay Niall as you mentioned, there of course food to go. That's been a huge area of development over, over the past year, and think probably a huge learning curve for the restaurant sector and hotels, and really everyone who has tried to pivot and offer whether it's takeaway or home meal kits or grab and go offerings. There's really been a lot of innovation in this area.

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I mean in your view is a short-term fad that is likely to disappear as soon as we go back to, you know, in house dining or is it something that's set to continue? And what, what do businesses who were engaging in, in takeaway and these other models need to be thinking about?

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**Niall Hill:** Ruth it will probably see a slight drop off when restaurants re-open, but I believe that it's definitely here to stay. Restaurants and in particular high-end ones who traditionally have never done take away or provide a delivery service are now looking at what worked during lockdowns and bolting this resort of revenue onto the future business model.

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So, it's all about securing their future of business and to be more resilient. Customers, I think are also loving the fact that they can have such incredible food in the comfort of their own home. Like you take in Alinea in Chicago, it's one of the best restaurants in the world, you know, and they're doing comfort foods, which is a coq-au-vin and takeaway.

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So, they've really kind of had a look at, you know, in times of uncertainty they've looked at comfort food as an emotional way of tapping into their customers. And if you think, you know, you're getting a coq-au-vin, which is beautiful dish. It's probably a fraction the price of what you would probably spend in Alinea on a normal dining night.

[00:30:19]

I think the key here is designing food to go with that is again, it's cross-functional with your other menu. So, it's also about driving those efficiencies and also having a look at recipes that are scalable, because what you don't want to do is. It to be too finicky, but you also want it to be deliverable.

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So, when you're meeting that customer demand, it's that the customers are getting the same experience at home as they are in the restaurant under certain dishes that lend itself to that however, but I still feel that restaurants, because our commercial kitchens need to really test these dishes in a domestic setting to ensure that their customers get the best results in either reheating or part cooking.

[00:30:58]

And you see all these different meal kits, you see if from a meal that you reheat or a meal that you, you have part to play in cooking and, that's also an attraction and you can see at the very kind of low end that people just want the five-day meal plan to customers who want a full, a Michelin-star dining experience in their own home.

[00:31:17]

And I think that's something that can't be ignored. So, I definitely would say that it, it's, it's, it's here to stay and I think restaurants would be just a little bit smarter about their menu design based on that.

[00:31:29]

**Ruth Hegarty:** Great and okay so we've, we're coming to the end of our first episode of Inside Food, and I suppose just to, to, to wrap up, I'd like to ask each of you very briefly. If you've got one practical tip that you would give to businesses as to what they should be doing now to be in the best shape for, for re-opening, we'll start with you Niall.

[00:31:47]

**Niall Hill:** My first tip would be to re-engineer your current menus in line with current demand and current trends while driving efficiencies by most importantly, get your costings right.

[00:31:57]

**Ruth Hegarty:** Great, Joe?

[00:31:59]

**Joe Quinn:** I would say, get your breakfast right, you know, we're, we're a people business and people will buy from you and direct proportion to how much they like you, and they would like you in indirect proportion to how you make them feel, so if you make them feel safe and you make them feel that they're having a great breakfast experience then you know they will return again and again and again, and it's all about just getting a working group together, getting your objectives in writing, getting your performance, measurements and targets.

[00:32:28]

And measure your success against it and incentivise your teams and you know; we mentioned the breakfast toolkit earlier on. There's an awful lot of good advice there. So that's what I would say is because it's the biggest challenge I think Irish hotels face is to get breakfast right every time.

[00:32:43]

**Ruth Hegarty:** And Amanda.

[00:32:46]

**Amanda Horan:** Well, I suppose it's really to just reinforce what Joe and Niall have said, you know Fáilte Ireland are really here to help and we have some great free tools on the website, we have raised accessible free training right now. So, contact your industry body, you know to access some of the Fáilte Ireland training or if you're already in contact with your local Fáilte Ireland representative reach out.

[00:33:06]

Because I think while we really are anxious to ensure businesses do now is to pause, reflect, be strategic in what you're going to do now because we need what you're doing for 2021 to be profitable and sustainable in the long term.

[00:33:21]

**Ruth Hegarty:** So that's it for our very first episode of Fáilte Ireland's Inside Tourism Business podcast. My thanks again to Amanda Horan, Joe Quinn, and Niall Hill for joining us this week. Throughout series one, we'll be delving inside food sharing expert advice on how to run a leaner more successful food operation. Each week we'll be joined by industry practitioners to share their experience.

[00:33:42]

In our next episode, Niall will be back with us again, alongside Fergus O'Halloran, managing director of The Twelve Hotel, Galway for discussion on menu engineering. Until then goodbye.

[00:33:54]

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