

FOODARTNATURE, ANNAPOLIS VALLEY, NOVA SCOTIA

Case Study

Destination Canada

December 2024





This case study is featured in the [Destination Dialogues 2024](#) Online Workshop Report: *Crafting Legendary Visitor Experiences* by [Celes Davar](#). The report delves into the key concepts and learnings presented in the online workshop, a virtual event organized by Destination Canada, to inspire, inform and empower rural destination development professionals. Celes facilitated the virtual event and shared the story of FoodArtNature in Annapolis Valley with participants.

In 2022, three organizations came together to develop a suite of new experiences reflecting the people, stories and regional geography of the Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia. The Wolfville Farmers' Market, Blomidon Naturalists Society and Earth Rhythms may seem unlikely allies, but their values aligned, they began working together—and their work continues to this day in the form of the FoodArtNature project.

At the time, there was an absence of a regional destination marketing organization (DMO) or other

organization focused on tourism development or marketing in the region. However, with the support of federal Tourism Relief Fund, an opportunity arose for these three organizations to collaborate. Together, they represented grassroots and community traditions, stories and intentions.

As a non-profit with a huge business base of 65 vendors, the Wolfville Farmers' Market is known as a business incubator of new ideas and already had a terrific pool of storytellers and retailers working together, exploring opportunities to develop new revenue streams.

The Blomidon Naturalists Society, a non-profit, member-based charity dedicated to enjoying and protecting nature, had been taking steps to become more externally engaged and relevant to its members, as well as assessing how they could help build stronger nature connections within the community and share these connections with visitors to the region.



Based in the Gaspereau Valley, Earth Rhythms is a private sector experiential tourism operator and experience coach led by president and owner Celes Davar. The team’s desire was to help provide some of the training and coaching supports needed to enable new experience hosts to develop and bring new experiences to market.

These three organizations have now been working together for more than two years and have launched a suite of more than 12 new legendary visitor experiences that are regenerative in practice

and offered in all four seasons. The new experiences are sustainable both environmentally and financially, adding new revenues for existing businesses. They ReImagine tourism as hands-on, interactive and slow travel opportunities. Focusing on collaboration with community partners, these new experiences are giving back in unique ways to community projects and organizations, with a percentage of ticket revenues going to support these community initiatives.



EVOLUTION OF FOODARTNATURE



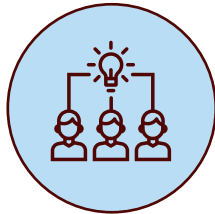
The origins of the FoodArtNature project reflect some core principles:

- Hosts are local practitioners who want to share their knowledge as purchasable experiences.
- Visitors and residents should have access to regenerative experiences highlighting sustainable food, agriculture, nature, ecology, and local culture.
- Providing memorable, unique experiences that people will love involves care and thoughtfulness in their design and execution.

The FoodArtNature project has evolved in three phases.



1. The first phase involved the development of 12 new experiences, creation of a new website, adoption of a reliable eCommerce platform for sales and bookings, creation of digital assets and the establishment of mechanisms within this new operation to deliver project management and marketing services, as well as continued coaching.



2. The second phase has enabled the team and their experience partners to develop a marketing plan and tactics, explore opportunities to work with local conference centres and accommodations, develop targeted public relations tactics and adapt the initial leisure market experiences for group markets.



3. Between 2024 and 2026, there will be an eight more new experiences developed. Revisions, adaptations and variations of these experiences will respond to private booking requests, putting together custom itineraries and collaborating to respond to group requests.

DESIGNING NEW EXPERIENCES

Immersive Experiences



Good Food Adventures

Starting at \$79 /person
Wolfville Farmers' Market

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Nature Immersion in the Acadian Forest

Starting at \$50 /person
Soft Pine Wellness

[Book Now](#) [Read More](#)



Annapolis Valley Forest Bathing

Starting at \$140 /person
Soft Pine Wellness

[Book Now](#) [Read More](#)



Evangeline, Expulsions, Enchantment, & Elixirs

Starting at \$170 /person
Sister Lotus

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South Mountain Goat Walks

Starting at \$58 /person
Tipsy Toad Grove Farm

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A Sacred Ecology of Plants and Place

Starting at \$149 /person
Herbal Hill Farm

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Bay of Fundy Botanical Casting Adventure

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Starting at \$135 /person
Robertsons Farm & Apothecary

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Each experience includes a hands-on activity (or activities) revolving around a specific interest or practice, such as, foraging, meditation, cooking or regenerative agriculture. The experience provides an opportunity for guests to socialize and connect with like-minded participants, to try local food or products prepared by hosts, a local chef or fellow participants, and to learn about the land, ecosystem and community that they are visiting. Many of these experiences are

offered year-round. Each experience has been designed to build in best practices in sustainability, considering environmental and cultural impacts. All experiences reflect the best of Nova Scotian rural hospitality, because the hosts live in the communities and ecosystems they are inviting visitors to experience.



One of the core areas that is emerging within the FoodArtNature project is the embedding of simple, easy to implement regenerative practices such as the following:

1. Create the experience to be zero waste, demonstrating sustainability in action.
2. Feature local foods and menus, use locally made materials, and collaborate with others within the local area.
3. Include an outdoor walk and orientation to the local ecosystem as a component of each experience to establish a connection to nature.
4. Give a portion of each visitor experience fee to support a community project, a restoration action or biodiversity protection.
5. Reduce the energy and carbon footprint of the experience wherever possible.
6. Collaborate with other community businesses to offer transportation, indoor venues for rent, handmade journals or other products as part of the experience.
7. Develop a personal approach to address reconciliation that is heartfelt and authentic, within the experience.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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