Food tourism and storytelling in the Scandinavian North

The relation between place, food and tourism is gaining interest from actors in both private and public sectors in the Nordic countries. Food is discussed as potential for product development and image building, based on reasoning on how value may be added through geographical food branding. However, food and drink may also be regarded as a tangible way to communicate local ways of life and as bearers of symbolism and values. The process of commercialization is therefore closely linked to aspects of control and respect, elements found in the criteria section on socio-cultural sustainability in the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) system for sustainable tourism development. The regional development organization in the Swedish region Västerbotten has developed a work methodology based on the GSTC criteria which together with initiatives of the Sámi associations can be used to illustrate how food, place-based heritage and tourism communication can be performed in virtual as well as tangible ways, to promote economic and sociocultural potential.

This presentation entails a case study published in Folklore, people and place: International perspectives on tourism and tradition in storied places (Åberg and Carson in Hunter and Ironside eds., 2023, Routledge), together with an exploration of the strategic context of Västerbotten where the regional tourism organization has based its approach on the GSTC. The authors Åberg and Carson are human geographers, exploring aspects of tourism development in more peripheral areas of the Scandinavian North.

Kajsa Åberg, Region Västerbotten, Sweden
Doris Carson, Umeå Universitet, Sweden

Keywords
Tourism development
Regional development
Policy setting
Cultural heritage
Food tourism