Preparing for Your Culinary Heritage Certification Assessment

Welcome to the Culinary Heritage Certification process!

This guide will help you prepare for the on-site visit by a Culinary Heritage Certification Inspector. The assessment is an opportunity to demonstrate your business's connection to regional culinary heritage, its everyday working practices and its commitment to quality and sustainability.

The following steps will help you prepare for a smooth, informative and constructive assessment.

1. Understanding the Certification Criteria

- **Familiarise yourself** with the certification criteria, which include:
  - Culinary heritage preservation
  - Sustainability and local sourcing
  - Quality and authenticity
  - Community engagement
  - Transparency in operations
  - Innovation in Tradition
- Review these areas to ensure your practices align with **Culinary Heritage standards**.

2. Prepare Key Documentation

- **Supplier Information**: Have relevant supplier information available, such as supplier lists, invoices or other documentation that demonstrates the origin of important ingredients and products, particularly those sourced locally or regionally.
- **Sustainability Practices**: Be prepared to discuss your waste management, recycling, or energy-efficient practices.
- **Community Engagement**: Gather any promotional materials, partnerships, or examples of events that show your engagement with the local community.

3. Showcase Your Menu or Product Offerings

- **Highlight Traditional Dishes or Products**: If you have specific items on your menu or product list that are tied to local traditions, ensure they’re available for the inspection day.
- **Explain Ingredient Choices**: Be ready to discuss the origins of your ingredients and why certain items are chosen to reflect local flavours and heritage.

4. Prepare for Tastings

- **Select Representative Dishes or Products:** Where relevant, prepare a small selection of signature dishes or products that best represent your business's culinary identity, quality and connection to local or regional food culture.

- **Present Your Normal Offering:** Tastings should reflect how products or dishes are ordinarily prepared and served, providing the inspector with an authentic understanding of the customer experience.

5. Be Ready to Answer Questions

- **Culinary Heritage and Traditions**: Be prepared to talk about how you incorporate local traditions into your menu or product line.
- **Sustainability**: Explain any eco-friendly practices, such as reducing waste or sourcing locally, that demonstrate your commitment to the environment.
- **Transparency**: Show how you communicate sourcing and production practices to customers (e.g., through menu descriptions or product labels).

6. Involve Key Team Members

- **Inform Staff**: Make sure your team is aware of the assessment and understands the purpose of the certification.
- **Introduce Relevant Staff**: During the visit, introduce any team members who play a direct role in the production, sourcing, or sustainability efforts of your business.

7. Prepare the Physical Space

- **Showcase Cleanliness and Organisation**: Ensure your venue is tidy, organised and represents your usual standards.
- **Show Your Everyday Operations:** Ensure that relevant production, preparation or customer areas are accessible where appropriate. The inspector should be able to gain an accurate understanding of your normal working environment and practices.

8. Be Ready to Share Your Vision

- **Talk About Your Goals**: Inspectors are interested in understanding your dedication to the Culinary Heritage values and your vision for the future.
- **Highlight Innovations**: If you're balancing tradition with innovative ideas, share how you're achieving this without compromising authenticity.

9. After the Assessment

- **Assessment Feedback:** Following the visit, the business receives a written feedback report outlining the certification outcome, highlighting strengths and providing constructive recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Regardless of the certification outcome, the feedback is intended to support ongoing development and encourage businesses to strengthen their commitment to the Culinary Heritage principles.

Final Reminders

- **Showcase your passion** for your region's culinary heritage.
- **Emphasise authenticity** in everything you present.
- **Be open and transparent** in discussing your practices.