



La Rousse Foods' second edition of "Meet the Suppliers" trip

Following the success of the Kilkenny "Meet the Suppliers" chefs trip in April, La Rousse Foods invited another 10 chefs to discover more local suppliers in Co. Kerry and Cork. The group started its trip with a stop at [Toonsbridge Dairy](#) Factory, which produces fresh buffalo mozzarella. The chefs got to see how the cheese is made, pulled and shaped, from start to finish and then had lunch in the Toonsbridge Cafe, with, of course, freshly made mozzarella on the menu.



The next stop was at [Kenmare Select Smoked Salmon](#)'s production facility. The company started about 20 years ago when the Benoit family took over the old factory and gave it a new life. Using exceptionally fresh salmon, sourced from the deep, clear waters of the Atlantic Ocean, the company cold smokes their fish delicately to create a subtle, yet distinct, taste unlike any other smoked salmon. The chefs got to see how the salmon is prepared and smoked by trained master smokers. They then tasted the different cuts and suggested preparations of this extremely fine product.





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That evening, the group had the pleasure to dine and stay at [Sheen Falls Lodge](#) in Kenmare. On the menu that evening, among other things they tasted Seared Nuggets of Foie gras, blackberries, beetroot, scallion and warm brioche as a starter, then continued with a Duo of Season Killarney Park Venison, Confit braised Ossobuco, Fig and red onion tartlet in Port and red wine Essence. Finally, for dessert, the chefs ate Dark chocolate crème brûlée and coconut mousse. A majority of the ingredients used for the menu that evening were local.

The next day, the chefs took a boat trip on the three lakes around Kenmare, to admire the breath-taking beauty of the scenery and discover the varied flora of the riverbanks and mountains around. After accosting at Muckcross National Park, they met local expert Cormac for a foraging session. The group came across some superb specimens of ceps, chanterelles, blackberries, hazelnuts, fresh bay leaves and bog myrtles, to cite only a few.



They then went to Coolies Farm, for a tour of the farm that breeds the famous Kerry Hill Lambs. The Kerry Hill Lamb is smaller than normal lamb and its environment (the heather foot hills of the Kerry Reek Mountains) means that it cannot be intensively farmed. Only a dozen farmers in the region have the quality label that allows them to rear this breed through the [Bord Bia Lamb Quality Assurance Scheme](#). There they prepared a heather-laden Fulacht Fiadh to braise lamb



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and prepare a chanterelle, pot barley and celeriac stew to go complement it. They then feasted on a selection of Irish Cheeses to celebrate October Month of Cheese, accompanied with Peter's Yard crisp bread and Golden Beetroot relish from Co. Louth.

The last stop of the trip was for an afternoon tea in [Muckross Park Hotel](#) to keep warm from the cold day out and rest before heading back. A very successful trip for our group that returned to their kitchens with a whole new range of menu ideas inspired by the experience.



Cooking Kerry Hill Lamb at Coolies Farm



Irish Artisan Cheese Selection, Swedish Cripsbread and Golden Beetroot Relish for October Month of Cheese



Afternoon tea at Muckross Park Hotel