

TRAVEL TRENDSPOTTING

The newest trend in travel: catching your own dinner

By **Jon Marcus** Globe Correspondent, Updated October 3, 2026, 6:00 a.m.



At Turtle Island resort in Fiji, a pontoon dinner. HANDOUT

With a maximum capacity of 14 pampered couples on a private island that was the setting for the film “The Blue Lagoon,” Fiji’s Turtle Island resort is among the planet’s

most exclusive, with horseback riding on idyllic beaches, diving in translucent water, and an indulgent seaside spa.

So it may seem incongruous to find guests farming, foraging, and fishing for their own food.

In fact, the experience is part of a worldwide tourism trend that's giving new meaning to the term "catching dinner."

These include lobstering at an inn on the coast of Maine, going to a farmers' market with the chef at a resort in Montenegro, foraging for edible flowers at a country house-turned-hotel in the English countryside, and catching flounder off of Florida's Amelia Island before watching a private chef prepare and serve it.

Such offerings are the logical convergence of several other movements, hospitality industry insiders say, from the farm-to-table fad to sustainability to a focus on local food.

"It's about connecting with the land and getting back some of life's simple pleasures that nature offers," said Richard Evans Jr., Turtle Island's owner and the son of its founder.

What he hears from visitors, said Evans, who grew up in Fiji, "is that, back home, there's this kind of rush. You have a lot of things that are built around convenience. Here

everything slows down. Life slows down, and you can enjoy life's simple offerings.”



Chef Beni in Fiji. HANDOUT

Turtle Island guests can learn to fish with handlines, hunt for crabs at night to eat the next day, open coconuts to use in local breads and soups, harvest produce ranging from bananas to sea grapes, and visit beehives that produce their honey.

There's a cultural part to this, too, said Evans — a principal purpose, after all, of travel. Freshly caught fish can be prepared on a Fijian-style open fire, for example.

“A lot of the things we do on the island reflect the Fijian way of life,” he said.

That's also the idea behind the Chef's Market Tour at The Chedi Luštica Bay in Montenegro, where visitors go to the local farmers' market with executive chef Boris Đurković, meet local producers, and learn about seasonal ingredients.

It's among a growing number of what Đurković called “culinary journeys that offer a deeper connection to the destination.” Travelers, he said, get “memorable encounters and a genuine connection to Montenegro.”

Inn by the Sea in Cape Elizabeth, Maine, has a three-night package from May through October called the Lucky Catch Lobstering Excursion, named for a lobster boat that takes guests out to Casco Bay to pull on orange slickers, fill bait bags, and haul their own dinner.

“Local, local, local” is how the inn's green program manager, Rauni Kew, describes the appeal of the cruise. “People want to do something that's iconic, and lobster is what people think about in Maine.”

As at Turtle Island, there's more to it, she said — in this case, the scenic views from the boat of the rocky coast and Portland Head Light.

These kinds of opportunities can make a destination stand out in a crowded market, said Darren Venables, estate manager at Chewton Glen.

The one-time country house on 130 acres in the south of England is now a hotel that offers foraging walks through its orchards, garden, and apiary. Guests learn to harvest edible flowers to eat later in their salads or as bar snacks.

The idea is particularly popular with families, Venables said.

“There’s a genuine interest in people teaching their kids where food comes from,” he said. At home, “they literally hit a button, and something arrives. We’ve lost touch with nature.”

A bonus, for properties like his: Foraging tours are among the kinds of things that social-media influencers like to photograph and share.



At Omni Amelia Island Resort & Spa in Florida, guests can go fishing with one of the resort’s chefs, who cooks up their catch, DEREMER STUDIOS LLC/PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEREMER STUDIOS,

Foraging is hot, said April Thompson, a “wild foods” instructor and author of a guide to foraging in the urban mid-Atlantic, who said she sometimes forages on her own when she travels.

“There’s an appeal to trying unique flavors and experiencing a place in a deeper way,” said Thompson. “We’ve lost touch with that experience in modern society. People don’t know what their food looks like outside of the form they get it in the grocery store, so this unlocks their curiosity.”

It’s also “kind of primal, in a sense,” she said. “This is how our ancestors fed themselves. It’s kind of like a treasure hunt, with the actual sensory experience of smelling a plant or a flower or an herb, and seeing the whole plant.”

For some of its new enthusiasts, there’s a bucket-list aspect to foraging. “It’s a notch on your belt to get to the top of the mountain and find this interesting rare plant to try that you could never get in a store,” said Thompson.

Experiences like these are often also simply about spending a day outside and eating the freshest possible food.



On Amelia Island, guests can catch their dinner. HANDOUT

At Omni Amelia Island Resort & Spa in Florida, for instance, guests can go fishing with one of the resort's chefs, who cooks up their catch.

"They could just go out and eat. But this is something they'll remember," said the resort's director of food and beverage, Steve Savastano.

“Travelers want to have an experience,” Savastano said. “It’s not enough to be at the chef’s table anymore. They want to be inside the kitchen.”

That’s an interest newly propelled by yet another intersecting trend: the elevation of professional kitchens in television shows such as “The Bear” and other popular culture.

“Whether you’re catching fish or not, you’re on the boat all day with a chef who’s passionate about his craft,” said Savastano. “You’re living something other people aren’t.”

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