



Food, glorious food

LEEDS INDIE FOOD FESTIVAL 2017 – THE INSIDER KNOWLEDGE.

Leeds Indie Food Festival 2017 – the insider knowledge
For the third year running, this May shines the spotlight on Leeds' independent food and drink talent over an eighteen-day festival.

From 11–28th May, almost one hundred innovative and inspired events will take place across the city, this year broken into one of three festival events strands: Eat, Drink or Do.

We spoke exclusively to Festival Director Matt Dix to glean some insider information about some of the most exciting events on the line-up, and to get his take on the shape of the Leeds food and drink scene.

With such a broad array of events, picking out any highlights is, of course, both very personal and very tricky. That said, Matt was particularly excited about LIF's presence this year at one of Leeds' most architecturally pioneering buildings. "We've got some stellar stuff going on in the Corn Exchange," he notes, "and it'll be the first time we've really used one of Leeds' most spectacular venues."

Combining our enduring passion for all things Scandi together with a restaurant with an amazing track record for using the best in local, seasonal produce cooked in the most creative of ways, one of the highlights of LIF in the Corn Exchange will, of course, be Harrogate heroes, Norse.

"Festival favourites Norse will be popping up over the first weekend for some Scandi fine dining," Matt tells me. "You can go and eat from an amazing menu, with a bar and tastings from The Champagne Concept and Whittaker's Gin, plus talks from Signe Johansen, author of 'How to Hygge'." Get all of the Scandi you need, wrapped up in a big,

tasty bow in the beautiful Cuthbert Broderick-designed Corn Exchange, on the evening of Friday May 12 or all day and evening on Saturday May 13

Although Leeds Indie Food was born in celebration of the great food showcased by informality and pop-ups around Leeds, we've seen the city up the ante in terms of fine dining options over the past year. I asked Matt whether we'll see that reflected in the LIF line-up. "I definitely think we've seen

venues upping their game this year," he acknowledges, "and I think the more formal dining we've seen recently is a sign of a maturing food scene." As well as the innovative informal events and the excitement of Norse's occupation of the Corn Exchange, Matt reveals that "Ox Club are set for an amazing (yet to be announced) takeover event with an award-winning London restaurant." We're all ears.



For more information on LIF and to stay up to date on its ever-expanding line-up of events, go to www.leedsindiefood.co.uk



LEEDS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL EXPLORES GENDER DIVERSITY IN TECH.

Bridging the gender gap

With digital industries growing a whopping 32 per cent quicker than other economies in the UK, Leeds' status as a centre for tech and digital industries is certainly something to celebrate. But is the ballooning success of this historically masculine industry any use to improving figures for female employment and work place diversity?

Leeds International Festival wants to show that it is and it can be; that there is both space and an overwhelming need for a diversification of voices in the tech field.

Leeds Dock is a thriving tech hub. Look at Sky, one of the biggest employers of coders in Leeds. We spoke to Natasha Sayce-Zelem, Sky's Head of Tech, who is also the woman behind the Leeds International Festival line-up.

"Sky surpassed original targets," she told us, "with a total of 650 highly-skilled employees now working at the Leeds Dock site. We're currently one of the biggest employers of coders in Leeds, a digital hub and the company plans to continue this year-on-year by offering thirty technology opportunities annually for young people."

Sky are certainly considering gender balance and diversity too, in this recruitment process – a hallmark seen across several of the bigger tech companies. Natasha adds:

"We wish to support and promote gender diversity in a traditionally male industry. Our free 'Get into Tech' programme is aimed at women with little or no previous experience in the technology industry, to illustrate the many ways into digital/tech/developer careers. We've seen 80 women enrolled on this course since last May, and more than 50 per cent of these have done so in Leeds."

Her tech strand curation reveals just how



hard she is striving for such diversity within an industry she loves. Most obviously is, perhaps, the headline conference,

Empowering Women with Tech, a day featuring female speakers such as Lauren Laverne (multi-award-winning broadcaster and founder of The Pool, a site for women 'too busy to browse'); Emmy Lovell (Vice President of Digital at Warner Music Group) and Dr Sue Black OBE (award-winning computer scientist, radical thinker and social entrepreneur) as just some of a stellar line-up at this Sky-sponsored event.

But Natasha hasn't just made a one-conference gesture towards diversity. "I'm happy that 67 per cent of the Leeds International Festival's Tech strand speakers are female," she says. "Inspirational female tech role models will speak across the event as a means to engage and inspire future females. I am particularly keen to illustrate the wide variety of opportunities a tech career can offer."

It seems that Leeds' flourishing tech scene is all set for a female injection into its ever-growing workforce, and Leeds International Festival is a great place to start.

Find out more about the events and speakers at Leeds International Festival at www.leedsinternationalfestival.com

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