

## Sheena Dignam

### *Galway Food Tours*



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Helping her parents run their guest house in the Loire Valley, and studying culinary arts and wine in France, fuelled Sheena Dignam's passion for top-quality food experiences.

Originally from Wicklow, the self-described Franco-Irish food and wine lover returned to Ireland 13 years ago where she originally worked in Cocoa Atelier Chocolate Shop on Drury Street.

After a trip to Galway, Sheena was impressed by the food and culture scene and, in 2013, she moved from Dublin to set up a life in the West of Ireland.

After delving into the Galway scene, she launched Galway Food Tours in 2014. For €50, food enthusiasts get a two-hour guided tour of Galway to visit local artisan producers and sample their products such as fresh sushi, fine cheese, Galway oysters, mouth-watering breads and savoury bites as well as delicious pastries and other sweet treats.

Since then, Sheena has expanded the company's offering with evening tours, a Connemara and Aran Island food tour, and a Galway City food and Connemara pub tour.

Now in her fourth year running the business, this has been her busiest yet. She hired a full-time staff member in addition to her two part-time staff in January and expanded her operations to include Clare. A new venture, Wild Atlantic Way Tours, caters for all her food tours outside Galway city - including the Clare tours as well as the Connemara and Aran Island tours.

Last year, Galway Food Tours was nominated for Best Food and Beverage Experience in Ireland at the 2017 Irish Tourism Industry Awards.

Engaging with other women running their own businesses through ACORNS gave her the confidence to do further tours, and the next county on Sheena's horizon is Mayo where she hopes to organise food tours next year.

*Providing early stage female entrepreneurs, living in rural Ireland, with the knowledge, support and networking opportunities to meet and even exceed their current aspirations.*