

Blackthorne Inn Project
Agritourism Initiatives

The vision of Fauquier county is to identify special places in the County and support them through individualized plans. The Blackthorne Inn is a cornerstone of the Upperville community. The revitalization plans for the property directly contribute to providing quality recreational and cultural opportunities.

According to the Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, agritourism is the "repositioning of the agricultural sector to maximize the integration of indigenous food, culture, wellness and the environment into a sustainable tourism experience." Key elements include farm based tourism, community tourism, agro-heritage tourism, agro-trade (agribusiness), culinary tourism, and health and wellness tourism. The Blackthorne Inn supports all aspects of this definition of agritourism.

The Blackthorne Inn will specialize in agritourism. The focus will be on farm-to-table culinary programs with hotel packages based on connecting guests to local farmers and our onsite Kitchen Gardens. Experiences will emphasize the slow-food movement, local sourcing, sustainable farm practices, and regional food history and education.

The Restaurant at Blackthorne Inn will be an integral part of the agritourism experience - attracting guests to experience the region's cuisine showcasing locally grown, seasonal ingredients. Culinary tourism directly impacts the cultural and natural heritage of communities by providing job opportunities, agricultural-biodiversity conservation initiatives and interactive and immersive visitor experiences. Blackthorne Inn understands its responsibility to the community to make sure that our agritourism initiatives also benefit the community. We will be partnering with local farm partners to source our products and developing our culinary teams with local talent. We will highlight local farmers on our menus and in our marketing. We will be positioning Blackthorne within the context of the region's culinary heritage and focus on telling the stories of our local farm partners and our commitment to the locavore practices that define our culinary philosophy.

Agritourism provides an opportunity for people to connect with nature, learn how food is produced and where farmers live, and have a memorable experience while doing it. The Blackthorne Inn will offer exceptional farm-to-table cuisine, easy access to nature and connection to local culture. These characteristics are the foundation for authentic agritourism experiences.

Tenants of our agritourism program tap into emerging travel trends: a growing interest in knowing the source of food and how it is produced; the rise of artisan production and respect for "making/makers" versus consumption; food and travel as a cultural experience; and technology overload. The Blackthorne Inn is a destination designed to help guests unplug, experience an authentic sense of place, and reconnect with nature.

Blackthorne Inn will offer agritourism onsite as well as connect guests to Fauquier County through nature excursions to Sky Meadow Park, wine tours to area vineyards, and farm visits to meet local purveyors and artisans.

Culinary tourism overlaps with agritourism when the culinary activity takes place on a farm or ranch, or when it involves meeting the producer. On property, the Kitchen Gardens and the organic vines will be the cornerstone of the agritourism programs developed. The Cooking School will offer classes to educate guests about local, sustainable farming practices and will source ingredients directly from the grounds.

The Blackthorne Inn will also serve as a hub for cultural opportunities including hosting artists in residence, guest chefs, and workshops.