

FOOD IS

GREAT

BRITAIN

A guide
for international media
Edition 4 - June 2016

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*White Horse Pub,
Romsey, Hampshire.*

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Food is Great



Contents

Quick facts about Food and Drink in Britain	3
Classic locations for afternoon tea	4
Instagrammable afternoon teas.....	6
9 unusual locations for afternoon tea	8
21 gourmet gastropubs in Britain	10
Iconic countryside pubs.....	14
10 of Britain’s most luxurious restaurants.....	17
Revolutionary restaurants	20
7 luxury gourmet retreats	24
Dine out on any budget.....	26
Chinese and Pan-Asian food in Britain.....	32
Britain’s vegetarian and vegan restaurants	35
18 great and green eating experiences	38
Britain’s freshest fish and seafood.....	44
9 mouth-watering food markets	46
A cheese tour of Britain.....	48
Britain’s chocolate story	50
Excellent organic restaurants	52
Fantastic ‘free-from’ food	54
Food from around the world	57
Halal Restaurants	60
12 sustainable restaurants	62
Family-friendly restaurants.....	65
Fashionably late feasting	67
Famous foodie faces.....	69
Ones to watch – chefs making their mark in Britain.....	71
Send yourself to cookery school!	73
27 cool cocktail bars	75
10 quirky cocktail bars.....	80
10 pub walks.....	82
Food destinations for serious lovers of eating	84
Extraordinary eateries	90
Restaurants with rooms	93
British regional specialities.....	96
British food with funny names! A brief guide.....	100

Fourth edition, June 2016.

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The Great British Roast.....	103
Alcohol-free bars.....	109
Whisky, Scotland’s national drink.....	110
Say cheers to English and Welsh wine!	113
10 ways to enjoy a British craft beer.....	116
Micro-distilled marvels.....	119
Specialist drink emporiums in Britain.....	122
Food and Drink Festival Calendar	124

Quick facts about Food and Drink in Britain

Did you know?

- In the 19th century, afternoon tea was known as ‘Scandal Water’ – the chance to while away a few hours gossiping and drinking tea (and punch!)... Find out where to do it in our piece on Instagrammable afternoon teas, p6.
- There’s a pub in Britain that holds two Michelin stars – The Hand and Flowers in Marlow. Read about 21 gourmet gastropubs on p10.
- The Signal Box Inn claims to be the ‘smallest pub on the planet’ – find out about the iconic countryside pubs of Britain on p14.
- The multi-course tasting menu at The Man Behind The Curtain in Leeds draws on techniques from ‘peers, the arts, music and contemporary culture’. Expect the unexpected at Britain’s most luxurious restaurants, p17.
- A completely gluten-free restaurant at a five-star hotel, a pay-what-you-feel café that is ‘anti waste’, a Michelin-starred eatery where the menu unfolds as a story... read about Britain’s ‘revolutionary restaurants’, p20.
- You can join a Michelin-starred chef for a day; Ian McAndrew hosts a ‘chef for a day’ experience at Blackaddie House in Glasgow. For more luxury gourmet retreats, see p24.
- Kate Moss, Anna Wintour and Lindsey Lohan helped to launch London’s Sexy Fish in style at its opening party; it’s just one of Britain’s many stylish and delicious Chinese and pan-Asian restaurants... see p32 for more.
- Several destinations in Britain vie for the title of most vegetarian-friendly place to visit – Brighton, Bristol and Edinburgh are just a few – find out where to dine meat-free and deliciously all over the UK on p35.
- Go fishing, prepare and cook your catch and then feast! A ‘catch and cook’ day at the renowned River Cottage is just one of the 18 great and green eating experiences served up on p38!
- Love oysters? There’s a whole festival devoted to them in Whitstable, south-east England. Find out about more fresh fish and seafood experiences not to miss on p44.
- There are more than 700 cheeses produced in Britain; from Cheddar to Stilton, Wensleydale to Caerphilly, ‘turophiles’ (that’s cheese lovers!) are well catered for. See p48.
- If you love chocolate and cocktails, Rabot 1745 is the place for you, combining cocoa and booze with satisfying results. See p50 for more on Britain’s chocolate story.
- Britain has a wealth of restaurants, cafés and bars that cater to those who avoid, or can’t eat, certain ingredients. From traditional pubs to hotel breakfasts, discover ‘free-from food’ on p54.
- From bowling-plus-dining to interactive tablecloths, kids and adults alike will love the family-friendly restaurants on offer in Britain – get the lowdown on p65.

Classic locations for afternoon tea

Afternoon tea dates back to the early 1800s, when a ravenous Duchess of Bedford couldn't wait until dinner for sustenance. Her elicit snacking soon forged a trend, and afternoon tea has been a British institution ever since. Today, traditional versions are found up and down the country – but always with warm scones.

Central London boasts a bounty of world-famous options, but none are more legendary than **The Ritz**. Served in its elegant Palm Court right from the hotel's 1906 opening, traditional afternoon teas contain finely cut sandwiches with classic fillings, a cornucopia of cakes and loose-leaf teas in pretty china cups. A genuine splurge, they cost £52 per person.

www.theritzlondon.com

A few doors along Piccadilly, department store **Fortnum & Mason** was the afternoon-tea choice of Queen Elizabeth II to mark her Diamond Jubilee. Including luxury finger sandwiches like rare-breed hen egg and cress, its Diamond Jubilee Tea Salon is now open to everyone else. Teas start from £44 per person

(www.fortnumandmason.com). Half a mile north,

The Langham hotel claims to have offered London's first afternoon tea 140 years ago and still serves a luxurious variety in its own Palm Court for £49 per person: raisins soaked in Louis Roederer champagne typify the offerings.

<http://palm-court.co.uk>



Afternoon tea at 'The Queen's Grocer', Fortnum and Mason

If you'd prefer a more rural experience, how about a Scottish castle? Seven miles east of Edinburgh, **Carberry Tower** serves its hot-soup amuse bouches, fine crustless sandwiches and macarons within a cosy, log-fire lounge whose windows face out onto glorious parkland. A traditional tea for two costs £35. www.carberrytower.com

In Edinburgh itself, **The Balmoral** – inside yet another Palm Court, this one with Venetian chandeliers and a glass-domed ceiling – accompanies traditional teas with the pluckings of a live harpist. At £35 per person, spreads includes just-baked scones and trolleys full of cakes.

<http://balmoral.skchase.com>

Britain's most scenic high tea is arguably the one laid on at **Holbeck Ghyll**, a country-house hotel in the Lake District, north-west England, a two-to-three hour drive from Manchester. While eating fancies and fondants, guests can watch steamers sail across Lake Windermere and gaze at the undulating Lakeland Fells beyond. Requiring lots of advance booking, teas are priced at £20 per person. www.holbeckghyll.com



Delightful and fanciful – Tea at the Top at The Duke of Cornwall

A rival for that title is **The Duke of Cornwall**, in Plymouth, south-west England – just over three hours by direct train from London. For two people only, the luxury hotel's exclusive Tea at the Top offering takes place at the summit of its watchtower, providing 360-degree vistas of the

seaside town. For £80, two people can enjoy sandwiches, scones, bubbly and your very own butler. Binoculars are provided. www.thedukeofcornwall.co.uk

While the Duke's watchtower was only ever decorative, real history awaits at **Grand Café**, further east along the coast in Southampton – 90 minutes by rail from London. Afternoon tea here takes place in the same ballroom that first-class passengers of the Titanic once used. So as well as French Renaissance-style décor, pretty petits fours and more-ish cupcakes, you'll be treading in some fateful footsteps. It costs £17.50 per person to do so. www.grand-cafe.co.uk

Titanic fans will probably want to visit Belfast, too – the boat was built in the Northern Irish capital's shipyard, with a museum now occupying the site. While you're in town, be sure leave time for a decadent afternoon tea at the upscale **Merchant Hotel**. Beginning at £19.50 a head, its sandwiches, sweet breads and scones are served on handsome silver tea stands. www.themerchanthotel.com

Set scenically on the banks of Llandudno Bay in the north-west Wales town, **St Tudno Hotel** provides Welsh-style afternoon tea, one that also includes hot buttered Bara Brith (a regional fruit loaf). The venue is an elegant Victorian-style bar lounge, and the price is £11.95 per person. www.st-tudno.co.uk

If it has to be quintessentially English, try **Stoke Park**. Located 20 miles west of London, this grand country club, hotel and 27-hole championship golf course serves afternoon teas in its beautiful orangery. With cakes and clotted cream galore, the traditional version (£35 per person) is calorific enough – but positively healthy compared to chocolate afternoon tea (£40 per person), which goes cocoa-crazy. www.stokepark.com



Tea at the St Tudno

Lastly, no compilation of British afternoon teas would be complete without mention of **Bettys**, a collection of characterful tea rooms in north-east England. The original café in Harrogate gets most column inches – and crowds – but the branch on York's regal St Helen's Square is just as wonderful. Open since 1937, it pairs its handmade sultana scones and Yorkshire ham sandwiches with an art-deco interior and soothing piano music. The price is £18.95 per person. www.bettys.co.uk

Instagrammable afternoon teas

These afternoon teas look almost too good to eat... take a photo for posterity (and posting on Instagram) before tucking in to enjoy!

Super-cool hotel **The London EDITION** is home to a secret... in fact, it's home to many secrets, which are exchanged in its reservations-only Punch Room. 'Scandal Water' – 19th-century slang for tea – used to mean tea and a good gossip for members of London's high society; today, Scandal Water has been reimagined at Punch Room in five inventive ways, each of which pairs a different tea with a unique sweet or savoury dish. Just add juicy gossip!
www.editionhotels.com/london/restaurants-and-bars/punch-room/scandal-water



Sip on 'Scandal Water' at London EDITION's Punch Room

Chatsworth House, a grand stately home in central England's Peak District, has partnered with Wedgwood to create **The Flying Childers**, a restaurant exclusively serving afternoon tea. As you'd expect, given the involvement of one of Britain's best-known potteries, the crockery is beautiful, while the food served on it is just as artistic. The blue macaron emulates the classic Wedgwood design with a dainty white flower drawn in icing – bite in, for an aromatic Earl Grey flavour.
www.chatsworth.org/plan-your-visit/shop-and-eat/where-to-eat/flying-childers-restaurant



Dainty crockery and even dainty macarons at Flying Childers

For a hefty dose of Wedgwood, head to its headquarters in Stoke on Trent, in central England, where there's the Wedgwood Tea Emporium – complete with tea sommeliers to guide you through the selection – and the **Wedgwood Tea Room**. It's a foodie Instagrammer's dream: classic crockery adorned with picture-perfect scones and cakes. You can take the experience home by dropping by the Flagship Store or Factory Outlet before leaving.
www.worldofwedgwood.com/content/wedgwood-tea-room



Love the teacup? Buy one to take home!

From the Laura Ashley furnishings (it used to be owned by Sir Bernard Ashley, husband of the famous designer) to the custom-designed crockery, **Llangoed Hall** in Powys, mid Wales, is a classy option for afternoon tea. There's traditional cream tea and Welsh tea on offer, or book ahead for the full



Good thing you've got all afternoon for this spread at Llangoed Hall



A cup of coffee fit for royalty at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2016

afternoon tea or Laura Ashley afternoon tea, which includes Elderflower Champagne and floral teas, plus cakes, sandwiches and scones served on bespoke crockery inspired by Laura Ashley.

www.llangoedhall.co.uk/dining/afternoon-tea.html

At the **Palace of Holyroodhouse** in Edinburgh – The Queen’s official Scottish residence – you can drink and dine in regal style on a tower of home-made cakes, pastries and sandwiches, with loose-leaf tea and the option to add Champagne. If you happen to be more of a coffee drinker, you won’t be able to resist posting a picture of your cappuccino, which comes decorated with a very cute crown-shaped sprinkling of chocolate!

www.royalcollection.org.uk



High fashion meets high tea at The Berkeley

London hotel **The Berkeley** is a must for anyone who loves to Instagram food snaps as much as pictures of fabulous outfits. Their signature Prêt-à-Portea Afternoon Tea changes with every fashion season, serving delicious delicacies that reflect the hottest collections of the moment. Think Balmain-inspired peach posset and Manolo Blahnik stiletto biscuits, washed down with a loose leaf tea or a glass of fizz. [www.the-](http://www.the-berkeley.co.uk/knightsbridge-restaurants-bars/fashion-afternoon-tea)

[berkeley.co.uk/knightsbridge-restaurants-bars/fashion-afternoon-tea](http://www.the-berkeley.co.uk/knightsbridge-restaurants-bars/fashion-afternoon-tea)



Say cheese! Say cheers! Say three cheers for the Lords of the Manor!

Scones, jam and clotted cream made in a Michelin-starred kitchen – food moments don’t get much more memorable than afternoon tea at **Lords of the Manor**, in the Cotswolds, south-west England. Head Pastry Chef Kris Biggs has created a beautiful selection of pastries and cakes, which you can enjoy out on the lawn in the summer or by a roaring fire when it’s chilly outside. And with Michelin quality, it’s as beautiful to look at as it is to eat. www.lordsofthemanor.com/afternoon-tea



Krug, glorious Krug! Plus the prettiest macarons and cakes at The Merchant Hotel

An unmissable Belfast luxury experience, afternoon tea at **The Merchant Hotel** is served in the splendid and sumptuous Great Room Restaurant. Go for the most decadent version available, the Krug, which features a bottle of the high-end champagne, Royal Beluga Caviar and an array of cakes, patisserie and macarons.

www.themerchanthotel.com/bars-restaurants/afternoon-tea

9 unusual locations for afternoon tea

Afternoon tea is an age-old British tradition, but that doesn't mean you have to stick to traditional tea rooms to enjoy it. Ever thought about taking tea on a train? On a boat? In a prison? Follow our guide to some of the most unique places in Britain for afternoon tea.

1. On a train



A classy way to travel – on the Belmond Northern Belle, with a classic afternoon tea

Hop aboard the **Belmond Northern Belle** – sister to the Venice Simplon Orient Express – and transport yourself to a past era, when train travel was the height of glamour. Here, musicians roam the carriages and sustenance consists of freshly baked scones, perfect finger sandwiches, tea and champagne. Belmond Northern Belle also runs a Mad Hatter's Tea Party – an Alice in Wonderland themed event – and a Laurent Perrier afternoon tea, where passengers are treated to four types of vintage champagne. Journeys depart from various British cities including Glasgow, York, Manchester and more. www.belmond.com/northern-belle-train/afternoon-tea

2. At a royal residence

The **Royal Yacht Britannia** has sailed more than a million miles with The Queen, The Duke of Edinburgh and many other members of the royal family aboard. Many cups of tea would no doubt have been enjoyed by Her Majesty while sailing all over the world, and you can enjoy your own cup in style at the Royal Deck Tea Room. Freshly-prepared scones and cakes are served in the very place that the royal family used to entertain visitors, host drinks receptions and play deck games. Don't miss *Britannia's* lemon drizzle cake – a classic favourite. The Royal Yacht Britannia is berthed in Edinburgh, Scotland's capital city.

www.royalyachtbritannia.co.uk/plan-your-visit/royal-deck-tea-room

3. On an island

The Southwold Boating Lake in Suffolk, east England, is a quirky and original venue for a refreshing cup of tea and a view that's just as stimulating. Located on an island overlooking Southwold Boating Lake, it's an ideal vantage point for spotting exotic bird life from all over the world – bring the binoculars! Your focus will move wholeheartedly to your table once the afternoon tea arrives, consisting of homemade scones, delicious cakes and sandwiches served on gorgeous vintage stands.

www.southwoldboatinglakeandtearoom.co.uk/tearoom.html

4. In a chocolate shop

Chocolate and passion were always the fashion at the Cocoa Cabana... A haven for sweet-toothed visitors to Manchester, north-west England, Cocoa Cabana's chocolates have won awards and many devotees, who come for fresh truffles, brownies cakes and more, made by skilled chocolatiers. Settle down to a chocolate-themed afternoon tea, or substitute tea for hot chocolate if you're a true cocoa-aficionado. www.cocoa-cabana.co.uk



National Theatre afternoon tea – it's a showstopper!

5. At the theatre

The National Theatre's afternoon tea is as theatrical and exuberant as you would expect, themed around classic productions including *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *One Man, Two Guv'nors* and *My Fair Lady*. Settle in for the gastronomic show, which begins with 'Curtain Up!' – a delicious Bellini – and follows with two tasty 'Acts'. During the interval you can pick up your 'Ice cream according to *Ivanov*' and teas can be bumped up with a glass or bottle of Champagne or an espresso martini. For those interested in getting backstage at one of the capital's most famous landmarks, opt for the combined afternoon tea and tour package. www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/your-visit/food-and-drink/afternoon-tea

6. In a prison

The Clink is a fantastic charity that aims to reduce reoffending rates of ex-offenders. It does this by offering excellent training in hospitality and catering to prisoners and, in turn, offering customers absolutely delicious food in a restaurant on site at the prisons involved. There are branches of The Clink in London, Surrey, Cheshire (north-west England) and Wales. Head to the Cardiff restaurant to enjoy a lovely afternoon tea, featuring warm scones and perfectly made sandwiches. <http://theclinkcharity.org/the-clink-restaurants/cardiff-wales>

7. On a bus

Having a ride on a double decker red bus – officially known as a Routemaster – is a must-do activity for visitors to London, so add in a platter of cakes and a group of friends to make the journey even more fun. The BB Afternoon Tea Bus Tour takes in famous sites including The London Eye, Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, Piccadilly Circus and more. Meanwhile, *you* take in macarons, mini cupcakes, pastries, scones, quiche and – of course – tea! www.afternoontea.co.uk/uk/london/covent-garden/bb-bakery-bus

8. In a railway station

Enjoy a lofty vantage point over busy and bustling Glasgow Central Station and feel none of the rush or sense of urgency of the people on the concourse... Ok, so it's not actually *in* the railway station, but even better, the swanky bar Champagne Central (in the Grand Central Hotel) hovers above it. You'll want to take your time in this chic and relaxing lounge, enjoying afternoon tea with a glass of bubbles. It's enough to make anyone hope their train is delayed by an hour or two... www.thegrandcentralhotel.co.uk/champagne-central

9. On the Titanic (well almost!)

Belfast's Titanic Experience offers a delightful Sunday afternoon tea, with five-star service, live jazz and all the classic accoutrements: finger sandwiches, scones with clotted cream, tempting cakes and exquisite éclairs, plus an amazing array of teas. But the best part? You get to eat it in the Titanic Suite, which features the stunning replica staircase that you'll remember from the tear-jerking film starring Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio! <http://titanicbelfast.com/Explore/whatson/Afternoon-Tea-by-the-Grand-Staircase.aspx>

21 gourmet gastropubs in Britain

“Gastropub: a pub, bar or tavern that offers meals of high quality.”

This dictionary definition covers the basics of the gastropub concept, but hundreds of such places in Britain are doing so much more with their food than this explanation sums up. These exciting establishments put the emphasis firmly on local, seasonal ingredients dished up in cosy, informal spaces. Innovative, gourmet twists take the food to restaurant level and, in many cases, way beyond; here, we offer just a few suggestions.

1. The Sportsman, Kent, south-east England

Don't be fooled by The Sportsman's Twitter profile: “grotty rundown pub by the sea”. The Sportsman, on the north coast of south-east England, won the coveted top spot in *The Publican's* Top 50 Gastropubs 2016. The Michelin-starred pub's food is deceptively simple. The hyper-local ingredients take a pride in provenance to a new level: vegetables are from the garden, pork and lamb from farms next door, and fish and seafood from the Thames estuary. Chef Stephen Harris even churns his own butter and makes his own salt.



Rural surroundings meet sumptuous dining at The Sportsman

www.thesportsmanseasalter.co.uk

2. The Finnieston, Glasgow, Scotland

In a cracking little pocket of Glasgow that's packed with fabulous restaurants, bars and pubs, The Finnieston stands out for all the right reasons. The foodie emphasis is firmly on sustainable and ethically-sourced Scottish seafood – think oysters, house cherry-smoked trout, and hand-dived scallops – but the fabulous gin cocktail bar, maritime touches, glass panelling, low ceilings and buzzing crowd all help add up to what many consider to be Glasgow's best gastropub. www.thefinniestonbar.com

3. The Pony & Trap, Somerset, south-west England

You wouldn't expect to find one of Britain's foremost gastropubs tucked away in a tiny hamlet between Bristol and Bath, but that's exactly what this 200-year-old pub is. Accolades collected by The Pony & Trap include a Michelin star, Chef of the Year, Front of House of the Year, and second place in *The Publican's* Top 50 Gastropubs of 2016. The 'field to fork' menu is refreshed twice daily; expect innovations like scallop pops, grilled bone marrow and salted peanut mousse sandwich. www.theponyandtrap.co.uk

4. The Butchers Arms, Gloucestershire, south-west England

This 16th-century “real drinking pub” was named Pub of the Year 2016 by the *Michelin Guide*. The menu evolves throughout the day as fresh produce arrives. Remarkably, co-owner James Winter works alone in the kitchen and really knows how pack the flavour into his refined, classic British dishes. Only 25 diners can fit into the pub's two cosy dining rooms, while friendly locals fill the bar. A roaring fire, wooden floors and low ceilings hung with tankards complete the picture. www.thebutchersarms.net



The St Tudy Inn in Cornwall serves up one classy burger

5. St Tudy Inn, Cornwall, south-west England

Chosen as 'one to watch' in *The Publican's* Top 50 Gastropubs 2016, St Tudy Inn makes the most of its slightly inland location near Bodmin Moor. Chef-owner Emily Scott, who sold her last enterprise to celebrity chef Nathan Outlaw, showcases the finest seasonal produce from the nearby sea and fields, serving up the likes of monkfish with saffron, cream and rocket, and rare roast beef salad with green beans, new potatoes and horseradish cream. www.sttudyinn.com

6. The Felin Fach Griffin, mid Wales

If the endless awards (including a Bib Gourmand from the *Michelin Guide*), praise from critics and guests, and recognition from the best independent guides are anything to go by, The Felin Fach Griffin's philosophy is a winning one: "The simple things in life done well." Fresher-than-fresh ingredients from the pub's own Kitchen Garden complement seasonal produce from the Welsh Borders. Even better, once you've eaten, you can sleep it off in one of its cosy bedrooms. www.felinfachgriffin.co.uk

7. The Anchor & Hope, London

This stalwart on the central London gastropub scene operates a no-booking policy so expect a (worthwhile) wait. The descriptions on the menu are as no nonsense as the décor. Blunted explanations such as "a grilled Orkney kipper and tatties", "suet crusted steak pie for two" and "duck hearts on toast" belie the gutsy, bold skill displayed by the kitchen – cooking worthy of a Bib Gourmand, no less. Artwork for sale decorates the walls. www.anchorandhopepub.co.uk

8. Clachaig Inn, Scottish Highlands

Nestled in the heart of Glencoe, this place is the saviour of hungry hikers of a foodie disposition. Food is proudly sourced from Scottish suppliers wherever possible: venison from Highland estates, black pudding from a renowned family butcher on the Isle of Lewis and haggis from Macsween of Edinburgh. The Clachaig's three bars are worth the trip too, with a 300-strong selection of whiskies and live music. www.clachaig.com/the-food

9. The Coach, Buckinghamshire, south-east England

It's a tough choice between The Coach and The Hand and Flowers, both run by celebrity chef Tom Kerridge and both in the beautiful Georgian town of Marlow on the River Thames, west of London. The Coach has a brand new Bib Gourmand award from the 2016 *Michelin Guide* while The Hand and Flowers has two Michelin stars. The Coach doesn't take bookings, whereas you need to plan ahead for the Hand and Flowers; there's usually about a six month-long waiting list for a table. thehandandflowers.co.uk, thecoachmarlow.co.uk

10. Y Talbot, west Wales

History permeates the ancient beams and inglenook fireplaces of this 17th-century drover's pub. Apparently there's an elephant buried in the garden and President Jimmy Carter has stayed here twice. But it's the food that draws people today. Chef Dafydd Watkin trained with

Marco Pierre White and was premier sous chef at luxury London hotel The Ritz, and his outstanding menu walks the line between pub classics and haute cuisine with dishes like slow-cooked Tregaron ox tail bourguignon, crushed carrot and swede. <http://yvalbot.com>

11. The Scran & Scallie, Edinburgh, Scotland

One of Edinburgh's leading gastropubs, The Scran & Scallie is the more relaxed offering from the Michelin-starred chefs behind two of the city's top restaurants. The menu is a tryst of modern dishes, much-loved traditional mains like cottage pie and forgotten classics such as sheep's heid Scotch broth, all in keeping with the pub's 'from nature to plate' ethos. The cosy interior is a characterful mix of tartan, tweed and Scandi-chic that works brilliantly with the pub's original rustic interior. <http://scranandscallie.com>

12. The Cross, Warwickshire, central England

Head chef Adam Bennett has worked at London's renowned Dorchester hotel and reached the finals of the Bocuse d'Or 2015 – the world's most prestigious gastronomy competition – so you can expect great things when you eat at The Cross, a 19th-century, Michelin-starred pub. Mouth-watering dishes such as cod with mussel risotto, fennel fondant and espelette leap off the menu; the star awarded to it in the 2015 *Michelin Guide* came as no surprise to local foodies!

www.thecrosskenilworth.co.uk



Enjoy food prepared with passion and expert skill at The Cross

13. The Anchor, Suffolk, east of England

The Anchor makes the most of the natural larder of produce available in this charming corner of coast: mussels from the north Norfolk coast, game from within five miles and vegetables from the pub and the village's allotments. It's easy to imagine such a bounty coming from this beautiful countryside, where the skies are as much of a feature as the land. The Anchor is popular with locals too, and locals here include a roll call of famous writers, directors and actors. www.anchoratwalberswick.com

14. Smokehouse Islington, London

With BBQ guru Neil Rankin at the helm, you can expect some of the best meat in town at this north London joint. Fresh meat, fish and veg are cooked, roasted, grilled, smoked and barbecued over sustainably sourced English oak. Typical meaty offerings include beef brisket hash, smoked bone marrow and fried egg; or opt for smoked lamb shoulder, polenta, raclette and sambal. Any place that serves Korean pulled pork as a side has got to be special! <http://smokehouseislington.co.uk>

15. The Morning Star, Belfast, Northern Ireland

A long-standing Belfast favourite, The Morning Star has its original mahogany counter, old terrazzo floor and an exuberant Victorian sign hanging outside; the building's history as a pub goes back to at least 1810. Behind the scenes, fresh local ingredients and sustainably sourced local fish are delivered daily, and the in-house butcher makes the sausages and burgers and cuts the steak. Just like the locals, you'll want to keep coming back.

www.themorningstarbar.com

16. The Penycae Inn, south Wales

As well as its impressive foodie offering, the winner of The Food Awards Wales Gastropub of the Year 2015 has some other rather quirky strings to its bow: it sells an eclectic selection of artwork, and it's also a micro zoo! Feast on the likes of Penycae lemonade batter fish and hand-cut chips, or golden syrup-roasted ham with leek & cider sauce, then roam the grounds with rescued meerkats, wallabies, pygmy goats, ornamental waterfowl and Japanese cranes. <http://penycaeinn.com>

17. Parkers Arms, Lancashire, north-west England

Another highly decorated gastropub, Parkers Arms features in The Publican's Top 50 gastropubs 2016, was Lancashire Life's Dining Pub of the Year 2015 and has won over numerous critics. Bread, pastries, ice creams, chutneys and biscuits are made on site, and menus are changed twice daily, but the hand-raised pies remain legendary! Incidentally, Parkers Arms claims to be the closest hostelry to the centre of the UK. www.parkersarms.co.uk

18. The Rat Inn, Northumberland, north-east England

If it weren't for the food, the views across the Tyne Valley from The Rat Inn's terraced beer garden would steal the show. The Rat has been at the heart of village life in Anick for over 200 years, and is now drawing in foodies from much further afield. Almost as hard as choosing what to eat is deciding where to sit: by the log fire in the lounge bar, or in the conservatory with those tremendous views. www.theratinn.com

19. The Angel Inn at Hetton, Yorkshire, north England

Owner Denis Watkins was nicknamed "the Godfather of the Gastropub" when he died in 2004. Thankfully, The Angel Inn's prominent place in the history of the gastropub is safe in the hands of his family and a close team. The Angel has won just about every regional and national foodie award going. The food is a quirky blend of "modern British with French Yorkshire nuances", which translates local ingredients into delightful morsels like wild mushroom and truffle suet pudding, and Earl Grey cr me patisserie. www.angelhetton.co.uk

20. The Marksman, London

With original Victorian mahogany panels, beers on tap and locals propping up the bar, The Marksman in the east London borough of Hackney is a 'proper pub'. And it serves up food that will make you very happy: simple, seasonal British food inspired by London's rich culinary history, such as beef and barley bun with horseradish cream; mallard, butternut squash and medlar; and chocolate, blackberry and barley malt. www.marksmanpublichouse.com

21. The Poacher's Pocket, Northern Ireland

This nook of Northern Ireland to the south-east of Belfast is experiencing something of a culinary revolution, and the team behind The Poacher's Pocket is largely responsible. (Sister establishments The Parson's Nose and Balloo House are just as deserving of places in this list.) This is fine-dining food dished up in a casual, relaxed pub environment, with a well-stocked farm shop on site; thoroughly deserving of its Best Gastro Pub in Ireland 2015 title. www.balloonns.com/the-poachers-pocket.

Iconic countryside pubs

Dining out in Britain isn't only about the food; sometimes it's also about the accompaniments. We're not necessarily talking gravy, ketchup or mustard either – because in some places in Britain, breakfast, lunch and dinner come with a hearty portion of history, ghosts, and famous connections on the side. This is particularly true of Britain's countryside pubs, which come in all ages, shapes and sizes, and can be found in all kinds of extraordinary locations.

THE OLDEST... Reputedly England's oldest inn, **The Old Ferry Boat** sits on the riverbank in the hamlet of Holywell in rural Cambridgeshire, east England. The current premises, complete with thatched roof and white stonework, date from 1400 – although it's believed that an inn stood on this site as long ago as 560. The pub's old heart is rustic and cosy, with inglenook fireplace and mismatched furniture. Its seven guest bedrooms, housed in a later extension, are designed for today's travellers with contemporary comforts such as modern en-suite bathrooms and free Wi-Fi. Now one of over 100 historic pubs operated by Old English Inns, its menu focuses on pub favourites including British beef and ale pie, sausage and mash and traditional Sunday roast. www.oldenglishinns.co.uk/our-locations/the-old-ferry-boat-st-ives

***Where is it?** Holywell is in Cambridgeshire, two hours north of London by car.*

With a history spanning more than 900 years, **The Skirrid Mountain Inn** is reputed to be the oldest continuously running pub in Wales – there's evidence suggesting the inn was here during the Norman Conquest in the 11th century. Located in the beautiful Brecon Beacons National Park, it has become an integral part of local legend and folklore, with links to famous figures including Shakespeare and Owain Glyndŵr, the last native Prince of Wales. What's certain is that the inn was used in the past as a courtroom and execution place. Those sentenced to death would be hung from an oak beam above the staircase where a noose hangs to this day – victims of the rope are still said to appear, hence it's also considered one of Britain's most haunted pubs. Today it promises a friendly welcome, comfortable rooms, good beer and hearty meals, although spectral visitations can't be ruled out. www.skirridmountaininn.co.uk

***Where is it?** In Wales, one hour north of Cardiff by car.*

Set on the lovely village square of Drymen, **The Clachan Inn** is officially the oldest pub in Scotland. Its license was registered in 1734, with the first licensee being Mistress Gow, the youngest sister of Scottish outlaw and folk hero Rob Roy. The name means 'a building of stone' – which would have been unusual in its day, when buildings were typically made of turf. Today, this tartan-carpeted, family-run inn offers true Scottish hospitality in its bar, restaurant and four guestrooms. Open for lunch and dinner, favourites include haggis filled fillet steak, homemade lamb and rosemary burger, and freshly breaded fillet of haddock. With breathtaking Loch Lomond just three miles away, it's ideal for hungry visitors and weary walkers alike. www.clachaninndrymen.co.uk

***Where is it?** Drymen is in Scotland, 45 minutes north of Glasgow by car.*

Established in 1611, **Grace Neills** in the small port town of Donaghadee is Northern Ireland's oldest pub. With a history stretching more than 400 years, it opened as The Kings

Arms but was renamed in 1842 when a father bought the premises as a wedding present for his daughter Grace – a strong-spirited character who cemented the pub’s reputation for hospitality, and who ran the pub until she died at the grand age of 98 years old. Parts of the pub have changed little since Grace’s day, with many echoes of the past – including the smugglers and horse-thieves who’d gather and plot there in days gone by. Today there’s a newly refurbished kitchen and restaurant, with a bistro menu that includes homemade burgers, grilled steaks with Irish Bushmills whiskey and mushroom sauce, plus international favourites such as Thai red chicken curry and Mexican fajitas. www.graceneills.com

Where is it? Donaghadee is on the east coast of Northern Ireland, 45 minutes east of Belfast by car.

THE SMALLEST...Several pubs lay claim to being the smallest in Britain. Measuring 8ft x 8ft (2.5m x 2.5m), **The Signal Box Inn** goes one further and claims to be ‘the Smallest Pub on the Planet’. This tiny timber structure is a former railway signal box adjacent to Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway, a popular tourist attraction in the seaside resort of Cleethorpes. The ultimate mini-bar, it can seat just four customers plus two standing at a squeeze – fortunately, there’s room for more outside in the beer garden. Despite the diminutive size, it serves a large choice of cask ales, lager, bitter, spirits, wine and cider, ranging from big-name brands to small handmade batches of artisan craft beers. However, with no space for a kitchen, food options are limited to crisps or nuts.

www.cclr.co.uk/signalboxinn

Where is it? Cleethorpes is on the east coast of England, just over two hours from Manchester by car.

THE MOST REMOTE...Located in the village of Inverie on the north-west coast of Scotland, **The Old Forge** is recognised as Britain’s most remote pub in the *Guinness Book of Records*. With no roads in or out, to get here it’s either an 18-mile hike over a mountain pass or a seven-mile sea crossing. Despite such obstacles, a surprising number of people do make the journey – and when they do, they’re rewarded with a pub that ranks among the best in the world on various Top 10 lists. Its famous seafood platter includes fresh creel-caught Loch Nevis langoustines, hand-dived scallops, local mussels, crab claws, and Gленуиг smoked salmon. There’s also a hearty venison burger, while vegetarian choices include ravioli stuffed with wild black mushrooms. All the seafood and venison are locally sourced, sustainably caught, and come from within a seven-mile radius. It’s also a hub of live music, from Ceilidhs to impromptu jams, due to the many bands and singer-songwriters who visit. Accommodation is also available. www.theoldforge.co.uk

Where is it? Inverie is in north-west Scotland. The nearest accessible town is Mallaig, four hours north-west of Glasgow by car, then continue by boat or on foot.



THE HIGHEST...Standing high in the Yorkshire Dales, the **Tan Hill Inn** is Britain’s highest public house. At 1,732 feet (528m) above sea level, this historic 17th-century pub is a beacon for walkers and inquisitive tourists. Exposed beams, stone-flagged floors and a roaring fire give a homely feel, and a menu of satisfying pub favourites ensures no one

Enjoy a drink surrounded by spectacular views at Yorkshire’s Tan Hill Inn

leaves hungry. Choices include Whitby scampi and chips, Yorkshire pudding topped with local Swaledale sausages, and steak and ale pie with suet pastry. Endeavouring to support local breweries, ales include Black Sheep bitter and Theakston Old Peculier, as well as Tan Hill Ewe Juice, an amber ale that's cask conditioned right here at Britain's highest pub. For those wanting to stay overnight, en-suite rooms and camping are both available.

www.tanhillinn.com

***Where is it?** In the Yorkshire Dales, around 90 minutes from York in the north of England by car.*

THE MOST DEADLY...With so many of Britain's pubs being old and steeped in history, it's not uncommon for some to have a gruesome past as well as associations with ghostly apparitions. But some have a reputation for gore that's hard to beat. Dating from 1106, **The Ostrich** in the village of Colnbrook, just a stone's throw from Heathrow Airport, hides a particularly murky past behind its historic white and timber façade. In the 17th century, the pub landlord and his wife made a great deal of money by murdering wealthy guests as they slept. A trapdoor was built into the floor of one bedroom, and when a suitably rich candidate would retire to bed, a hinge mechanism would tip the sleeping victim into a vat of boiling liquid below, thus killing him – it's said they murdered and robbed up to 60 guests before being caught. Today, the tempting menu includes pan-fried hake, pork belly roulade and herb crusted rack of lamb. Should you stay the night, listen out for creaking hinges!

www.theostrichcolnbrook.co.uk

***Where is it?** Colnbrook is 50 minutes west of London by car.*

THE TV STAR...The world of television has several famous pubs, and one of the few TV pubs to welcome real visitors is **The Woolpack** in Esholt, west Yorkshire. Exterior location filming for long-running British soap opera *Emmerdale* used to take place in this picturesque village, with the village pub enjoying a starring role. In recent years the cast and crew have moved to a purpose-built set, but fans of the soap still come to take a selfie in front of the pub's familiar façade. The smart interior is also adorned with pictures of cast members. Celebrity-stalking can be hungry work, so it's lucky that there's a menu of hearty pub classics with a local flavour, including giant Yorkshire pudding filled with topside of beef, and local butcher's sausages. www.thewoolpackesholt.com

***Where is it?** Esholt is in Yorkshire, north England, 30 minutes drive from the city of Leeds.*

THE LITERARY LEGEND...One of Cornwall's most notorious smugglers inns, **Jamaica Inn** became world famous thanks to Daphne du Maurier's bestselling novel. Having stayed here in 1930 and heard tales of local smugglers, she was inspired to write her own compelling story. A coaching inn built in 1750, Jamaica Inn was a rest-stop for weary travellers crossing the wild and treacherous Bodmin Moor. Remote and isolated, it was also an ideal hideaway for smugglers and the contraband they brought ashore. There are even tales of gangs of local 'wreckers', who'd lure ships onto the rocks then loot them of precious cargoes such as brandy and tea. Tea remains part of the proceedings today: the inn serves traditional Cornish Cream Teas in the afternoon, as well as a menu of classic pub fare including the carnivorous Jamaica Inn mixed grill and homemade steak and Jamaica Inn ale pie.

www.jamaicainn.co.uk

***Where is it?** In Cornwall, south-west England, five hours from London by car.*

10 of Britain's most luxurious restaurants

With some of the most celebrated and exciting luxury restaurants in the world, including three with three Michelin stars, fine dining in Britain is as good as it gets. But it's not always simply about the stars. Sometimes that luxe factor comes simply from being one step ahead of the crowd, or dining with a view that will take your breath away.

1. Alain Ducasse at The Dorchester, London

One of the world's most brilliant chefs, Alain Ducasse has a say in every part of this dining experience, from the careful selection of ingredients "grown with love and respect, in its distinctive land" to the handmade pink marble butter dishes and the walls studded with thousands of silk buttons in different shades of green – a touch of whimsy in a restaurant that prides itself on its professionalism and attention to detail. Try the seven-course Seasonal Menu (£180), which celebrates this season's freshest produce in some of the most refined dishes you'll ever taste. www.alainducasse-dorchester.com

2. L'Enclume, Lake District, north-west England



L'Enclume serves up 'oyster pebbles' and other wonders of the Lake District's natural larder

Nestled in one of the most beautiful parts of Britain, Simon Rogan's pioneering restaurant makes the most of its extraordinary backdrop. The skilled use of unusual foraged herbs, such as meadowsweet and scurvy grass, and vegetables from the restaurant's garden lift L'Enclume's food to a heavenly level. Expect super-pretty dishes that draw on nature for inspiration and presentation as well as taste. Here, you can eat "oyster pebbles," and brill in poultry juices with lovage, yeast flakes and fermented mushroom presented to a standard worthy of not one but two Michelin stars.

www.lenclume.co.uk

3. The Man Behind the Curtain, Leeds, north England

And now for something completely different, in this hip city in northern England... Hand over all the decisions to the team at The Man Behind the Curtain and they will "showcase what we feel is right for now"! The multi-course tasting menu (£115 with wine) draws on techniques from peers, the arts, music and contemporary culture. It sounds rather alarming, but don't worry; the restaurant was one of just 15 new venues awarded a Michelin star in the 2016 *Michelin Guide*, so you're in good hands. www.themanbehindthecurtain.co.uk

4. The Waterside Inn, Berkshire, south-east England

With three glittering Michelin stars to its name – the longest-held clutch of three stars in Britain – the legendary Roux brothers' Waterside Inn is a world-class dining experience. Nestled next to the River Thames in Bray village, a foodie paradise among the many cute

villages of this corner of south-east England, it serves exquisite, unashamedly French cuisine. Sample the best of it with the Le Menu Exceptionnel, a terrifically presented tasting menu (£160) (www.waterside-inn.co.uk). It's also worth mentioning Heston Blumenthal's The Fat Duck gastropub just along the road; it just missed out on its usual three Michelin stars when it wasn't open in time to be assessed following a temporary relocation to Australia. www.thefatduck.co.uk

5. The Kitchin, Edinburgh, Scotland

Some of the best food in Britain is plated up in a striking, converted whisky bonded warehouse in Leith, Edinburgh's old dock area. Chef Tom Kitchin is Scotland's youngest Michelin-starred chef. Kitchin has a highly seasonal "nature to plate" philosophy and works closely with carefully selected local suppliers, and all butchering and filleting is done in-house. The Early Spring menu, for example, features six Giga oysters from the Isle of Cumbrae prepared six ways, and roasted loin of roe deer from the Borders. Try the Exclusive Matched Wine Package (£125) <http://thekitchin.com>

6. Restaurant James Sommerin, south Wales

A hidden gem on Penarth's colourful seafront just south of Cardiff, Restaurant James Sommerin has three AA rosettes. It rates higher in *The Good Food Guide* than most Michelin-starred restaurants in Wales and chef James Sommerin was awarded a star at his previous establishment, so watch this space! Book the Chef's Table in the heart of the kitchen and watch your 14-course menu unfold before you (£150). www.jamessommerinrestaurant.co.uk

7. Martin Wishart at Loch Lomond, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, Scotland



A dining room with a view at Martin Wishart, which is located on the banks of Loch Lomond

Situated as it is on the southern shores of Loch Lomond in one of the most breathtaking parts of Scotland, it's critical that the food at Martin Wishart is at the top of its game; it needs to be in order to distract you from the view. Chef Martin Wishart is firmly established as one of Britain's most highly respected chefs, and this restaurant bears one of his two Michelin stars. Opt for the eight-course tasting menu (£95) and feast on the likes of Black Angus beef and marinated foie gras.

www.mwlochlomond.co.uk

8. Deanes EIPIC, Belfast, Northern Ireland

One of the new additions to the 2016 *Michelin Guide*, EIPIC raises the bar even higher for Northern Ireland's exciting fine dining scene. In the heart of Belfast, EIPIC was awarded its Michelin star just 18 months after opening. Chef Danni Barry trained at Simon Rogan's L'Enclume (see above). She brings with her a progressive, light touch to the menu, crafting dishes such as wood blewits, yolk, field garlic and cheddar. www.michaeldeane.co.uk

9. Restaurant Gordon Ramsey, London

Celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay's eponymous restaurant is another of Britain's three Michelin-starred restaurants. It offers an intimate dining experience, with room for only 45 diners, meaning the service is unparalleled. Savour delights such as Dover sole with razor clams and lemon beurre noisette, and asparagus from Jérôme Galis with black truffle, cape and aged Parmesan on the Seasonal Inspiration Menu (£175), or for a matchless and even more intimate experience reserve the Inspiration Table and watch as the exquisite dishes are created right in front of you. www.gordonramsayrestaurants.com

10. Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, Oxfordshire, south-east England



Prepare yourself for an unforgettable meal from start to finish at Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons

Despite the French chef, cuisine and name of this exclusive restaurant in the Cotswolds, there are few dining experiences as quintessentially English as this. The two Michelin- starred restaurant (and accompanying hotel) is in Great Milton Manor, a magnificent country house built from honey-coloured Cotswold stone and surrounded by perfectly manicured gardens, including a two-acre vegetable garden that produces over 90 types of vegetable and 70 kinds of herb, which take centre stage on the plates served inside. Make the most of it with

the seven-course dinner (£159) (www.belmond.com/le-manoir-aux-quat-saisons-oxfordshire).

Revolutionary restaurants

Britain is a testing ground for new and innovative ways to dine, encouraging us to rethink our relationship with food. This might involve going back to nature with foraged food, or back to basics with pre-industrialised techniques. Or it might be about safeguarding our planet with community cafés that rescue waste food and restaurants with zero-waste policies. Some places are even reinventing how, and how much, we pay. It's also about eating in all kinds of incredible environments, from rustic beach huts to purpose-built theatres of gastronomy.

GO GLUTEN AND DAIRY-FREE... Towards the end of 2015, one of London's top restaurants changed its entire lunch and dinner menus to gluten and dairy-free, becoming one of the capital's first to do so. Based in the five-star One Aldwych Hotel in Covent Garden, **Indigo** made this big change with very little fanfare – in fact, the majority of diners didn't even notice! Despite its healthy overhaul, the menu has plenty of to satisfy the heartiest of appetites. Using the best seasonal ingredients sourced from across Britain, choices include breast of Yorkshire rabbit, miso-marinated Loch Duart salmon, and fine cuts of grilled Scottish beef or Cornish lamb served with roast shallots and hand-cut chips. The dessert selection is equally indulgent. www.onealdwych.com/food-drink/indigo

Where is it? In central London, nearest tube: Covent Garden or Temple.

DINING WITH A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE... A roaming restaurant serving global home cooking, London's **Mazí Mas** is also a social enterprise supporting women from migrant and refugee communities. Meaning 'eat with us' in Greek, what began as a pop-up concept has developed into a series of long-term residences, including a three-month stint at Ovalhouse Theatre in south London in 2015. The first residency of 2016 is at The Russet, a café and bar in a former printworks in hip east London. What's on the menu depends on who's in the kitchen on any particular day – and with chefs hailing from countries including Iran, Ethiopia,



Mazí Mas offers delicious cuisine cooked with heart and soul

Brazil and Nepal, it may include Persian cuisine like Zereshk Polo ba Morgh (barberry rice with chicken), Berbere-spiced dishes such as Kik Wot (red lentil stew) or South American classics like Feijoada (traditional stew of black beans and sausage). As well as enjoying the authentic international food, you'll be helping migrant and refugee women to gain paid work experience, develop their skills, and fulfil their dream of finding a career in the food industry. www.mazimas.co.uk

Where is it? In east London, nearest Overground station: Rectory Road or Hackney Downs.

A RESCUED FOOD REVOLUTION... Believing that food is best cooked and eaten, rather than thrown away, Adam Smith founded **The Real Junk Food Project** in 2013. To kick-start his anti-waste food revolution, he opened Britain's first waste food 'pay-as-you-feel' café, the **Armley Junk-tion Cafe** in Leeds, north England. Volunteers collect unwanted food from supermarkets, wholesalers, market stalls, even other cafés and restaurants – things that would otherwise end up in landfill, including fruit, vegetables, meat, and dairy produce. Still

good to use, the project turns these ingredients into anything from a hearty soup to a delicious cake for its café customers to enjoy. Diners then pay what they feel, or may even offer to donate their time. Major supermarkets and restaurant chains have come on board, and now the project incorporates over 30 cafés and pop-ups across England, Wales and Scotland. These include the **Saltaire Canteen**, part of the historic Saltaire village World Heritage Site near Leeds, Bristol-based **Skipchen** in south-west England, who tour Britain in their 'Food Rescue Ambulance', and **Save The Date Café** in east London, whose interior was created by volunteers using reclaimed and recycled materials.

www.therealjunkfoodproject.org www.saltairecanteen.co.uk
www.thebristolskipchen.wordpress.com www.savethedate.london

Where is it? Saltaire is in Yorkshire, four hours' drive from London.

FAMOUS FOR FORAGING ...The foodie world currently has a fascination with foraging, with food found in forests and on seashores appearing on the menus of many world-renowned restaurants. But for some, like **The Three Chimneys**, foraging isn't merely a fad – it's the way they've stocked their kitchen for decades. Situated on the Isle of Skye, off Scotland's north-west coast, this remote gastronomic beacon naturally has a close relationship with the land. Utilising the island's natural larder, kitchen staff forage for ingredients such as wild garlic and gorseflower, as well as cockles, clams, mussels and seaweed from the shoreline. The result is a menu that focuses on local ingredients with true provenance and seasonal freshness – a recipe that has earned the Three Chimneys many awards and much acclaim over the past three decades. www.threechimneys.co.uk

Where is it? The Isle of Skye is in Scotland, just over five hours' drive from Glasgow..

Or... **Le Champignon Sauvage** in the historic spa town of Cheltenham, south-west England, is another foraging frontrunner – operating since 1987, this restaurant takes many ingredients from the surrounding countryside of the Cotswolds. Wales also has an abundance of wild food, so why not take a foraging expedition with **Original Outdoors**. Their small team of professional foragers has lead courses here for more than a decade, making north Wales the place to learn how to forage – after gathering basic ingredients, things get cooking over an open fire. For something a little less wild, **Bodnant Welsh Food** is a hub of all things fresh and delicious. The cookery school of this award-winning farm shop hosts 'Food for Free' days with a local forager. www.lechampignonsauvage.co.uk
www.originaloutdoors.co.uk www.bodnant-welshfood.co.uk

PAY-PER-MINUTE HOSPITALITY...A radical reinvention of hospitality, **Ziferblat** is a pay-per-minute café where everything you eat and drink is free – you simply pay for the time you spend here (currently priced at 5p per minute). The first of its kind in Britain, the concept was developed by founder Ivan Meetin in Moscow in 2011 – indeed, the name means 'clock face' in Russian. A social co-working space, it's where local designers, writers and filmmakers come to utilise the Wi-Fi, meet like-minded individuals and help themselves to cake, beverages and snacks. It's also an events space with DJs, poetry slams and screenings. Britain's first Ziferblat opened in east London in 2014. In 2015, the world's largest Ziferblat opened in Manchester's trendy Northern Quarter, including a studio and classroom for hosting workshops and yoga classes. Britain's latest Ziferblat occupies a beautiful Grade I listed building in Liverpool's Albert Dock, a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

www.ziferblat.co.uk

Where is it? Manchester is in north-west England, 2 hours 30 minutes by train from London.

BEACH HUT GOURMET... Proving you don't need fancy premises to cook great food, the **Hidden Hut** is little more than a wooden hut on a beach in Cornwall, south-west England. Situated next to the beautiful and remote Porthcurnick Beach, it's open from March to October for grab-and-go lunches – but the main attraction is the regular feast nights. For these big outdoor cook-ups there's only one dish, which can be anything from Greek-style spit-roasted goat to just-caught fish and shellfish cooked over hot coals. Like a big family picnic, diners bring their own plates, cutlery and drinks, and must dress for the weather because it all takes place outdoors come rain or shine. www.hiddenhut.co.uk

Where is it? Cornwall is in south-west England, 5 hours drive from London.

Or... in neighbouring Devon, enjoy fresh local fish at Exmouth's **River Exe Café**, a custom-built shed on a floating pontoon. Elsewhere, **The Company Shed** is a popular lunch spot for fresh crab, lobster, mussels and tiger prawns on the Essex coast of south-east England – take your own bread and wine, and arrive early because this fishy shed doesn't take bookings. In the north-east of England, set in an old shipping container on the coast near the city of Newcastle, **Riley's Fish Shack** is a rustic fish bar and grill with breathtaking views of the North Sea. And in Northern Ireland, **Harry's Shack** is a beach hut bistro on beautiful Portstewart Beach. www.riverexecafe.com www.thecompanyshed.co www.rileysfishshack.com www.facebook.com/HarrysShack

EPIC GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCES... Britain is home to many wildly innovative chefs whose food is part of a broader narrative – think Heston Blumenthal, whose 'Sound of the Sea' dish served at renowned restaurant The Fat Duck is accompanied by an iPod, providing sounds of seagulls and ocean waves. **Restaurant Story** is an innovative concept restaurant in London, telling a tale of the food that's served. With the 'Full Story' tasting menu, chef Tom Sellers takes diners back to their childhood, and across sea and land, with dishes created to evoke memories – and as the meal can last up to four hours, it's an epic tale! Diners are encouraged to join the narrative, by bringing along a book to add to Story's ever-growing collection. www.restaurantstory.co.uk



Food with a tale to tell at Restaurant Story

Where is it? In south London, nearest tube: London Bridge.

Or... Having worked at world-renowned Danish restaurant Noma, chef Michael O'Hare takes a different approach to food and design with his own restaurant **The Man Behind The Curtain**. The antithesis of Scandinavian trends, this designer dining experience is accessed via the top floor of Flannels, an independent fashion and lifestyle store in Leeds, north England. Also following its own path is **Restaurant Sat Bains** in Nottingham, central England, whose acclaimed chef Sat Bains experiments with otherwise unheard of techniques – opt for the tasting menu at the chef's table to watch the highly original dishes be prepared. www.themanbehindthecurtain.co.uk www.restaurantsatbains.com

ZERO-WASTE DINING... Britain's first zero-waste restaurant, **Silo** opened in the south England coastal city of Brighton in 2014. Keen to innovate the food industry, chef Doug

McMaster wanted to create a restaurant that respects the environment, our bodies, and the way food is generated. Using pre-industrialised methods, Silo's very own mill turns ancient varieties of wheat into flour, and its botanical brewery makes drinks from foraged ingredients. Silo also churns its own butter, makes its own almond milk and rolls its own oats. To achieve zero waste, all delivered produce comes in re-useable crates, containers or jerry cans. A favourite for breakfast and brunch, popular choices include spelt sourdough toast with homemade baked beans, bacon, espresso mushrooms and blood pudding, or yoghurt with oats and poached quince. Pollock, cod and pheasant appear on the lunch and dinner menus, accompanied by abundant but under-utilised ingredients including seaweed, seabuckthorn and nettles. All that isn't consumed goes into a huge compost machine. Silo's zero waste ethos is reinforced by its eco-cool décor, which is made entirely from up-cycled and recycled materials, including plates formed from plastic bags and tables made from industrial floor tiles. www.silobrighton.com

Where is it? Brighton is in south-east England, a one hour train journey from London.

7 luxury gourmet retreats

For a delicious and intense gastronomic experience, spend some time away on a food-fixated escape. Throughout Britain are luxury hotels whose kitchens are helmed by award-winning and Michelin-starred chefs – and besides gourmet cuisine and five-star accommodation, some boast additional foodie-focused elements such as cookery schools, kitchen gardens, wine tastings and cooking demonstrations. When luxury retreats taste this good, you may never want to leave!

1) Celebrity chef Raymond Blanc opened the renowned **Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons** in Oxfordshire in 1984. This luxury country house hotel has been one of the world's leading gastronomic destinations for more than 30 years – its restaurant earned two Michelin stars the year of its opening, and has held them ever since. Championing an ethical approach to cooking, many ingredients come from the hotel's two-acre vegetable garden, which includes cultivated herb beds, a mushroom garden and an orchard with apples, pears and quinces. There's also a cookery school that attracts a constant stream of budding chefs. www.manoir.com

Where is it? In Oxfordshire, near the city of Oxford, 90 minutes' drive from London.

2) A foodie-centric hotel in the New Forest, **Lime Wood** is home to **Hartnett Holder & Co**, an upscale yet unpretentious restaurant from chef Angela Hartnett. Its Italian-influenced forest dishes reflect the Italian heritage of this famous female chef. Guests can learn to master her signature home-cooked style at HH&Co Backstage, the hotel's new purpose-built cookery school kitchen. Half-day, full-day and two-day residential courses tackle everything from preparing game to making perfect pastries and pasta. A calendar of guest chef pop-ups brings other famous names to the restaurant and cooking school. This culinary effect extends beyond the kitchen: the hotel spa holds regular fitness classes amidst the herbs, bay trees and lavender of Lime Wood's fragrant Herb House Roof Garden. www.limewoodhotel.co.uk

Where is it? In the New Forest, near the city of Southampton, two hours' drive from London.

3) Sample the culinary delights of Wales at **Llanerch Vineyard**, a restaurant, bistro and 22-acre vineyard with accommodation close to the Welsh capital of Cardiff. A personal chef to royalty and celebrities, chef Angela Gray now runs a cookery school here: courses range from the cookstart academy, which provides young people with basic skills, to masterclasses for those wanting to cook to a professional standard. Wine connoisseurs may take a vineyard tour and sample the award-winning white, rosé and sparkling Ciriad wines produced here. The stylish restaurant and bistro offer a choice of classic and contemporary cuisine with plenty of local flavour. www.llanerch-vineyard.co.uk

Where is it? In Wales, half an hour's drive from Cardiff.

4) Located at the edge of the Yorkshire Dales, **Swinton Park** is a luxury castle hotel with cooking at its core. Housed within the ground floor of a converted Georgian stable wing, its cookery school has been designed to the highest specification with the latest Gaggenau



Learn how to master Angela Hartnett's signature style of cookery at HH&Co

appliances, but retains a homely atmosphere with an Aga. There's a range of classes led by Stephen Bulmer, formerly of the Raymond Blanc Cookery School. The school is an integral part of the hotel's gourmet weekends, which feature wine tastings with expert winemakers from around the world, and chef's table demonstrations featuring Michelin-starred guest chefs. The hotel's four-acre walled kitchen garden bestows the kitchen with fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs, while the surrounding landscape provides many of Britain's best artisan-made ingredients. www.swintonpark.com

Where is it? Near the town of Ripon in north Yorkshire, less than an hour's drive from York.

5) A foodie haven set among breathtaking scenery in south-west Scotland, **Blackaddie House Hotel** is a lovely 16th-century country house hotel whose restaurant serves the very best in Scottish food. Owner Ian McAndrew has been a chef for more than 45 years, and was at the time the youngest Englishman to attain a Michelin star. For those wanting to learn the secrets of a professional kitchen, the hotel offers the unique 'chef for a day' experience – a hands-on opportunity to join Ian and his small team in a real chef's kitchen for a whole day, from an initial menu planning meeting, to assisting with the preparation process, then onto service. It'll definitely whet your appetite. www.blackaddiehotel.co.uk

Where is it? In Scotland, just over an hour's drive from Glasgow.



Enjoy a delicious gourmet getaway to the Culloden Estate & Spa

6) Standing in 12 acres of secluded gardens and woodland, the **Culloden Estate & Spa** is a grand 19th-century mansion originally built as an official palace for the Bishops of Down. Located just outside of Belfast, its **Mitre Restaurant** is considered one of Northern Ireland's finest restaurants. Overseen by chef Paul McKnight, the menu features plenty of local and seasonal ingredients, including fresh herbs handpicked from the estate's organic herb garden. Located within the estate grounds is the **Cultra Inn**, a gastropub where guests

can enjoy more casual dining, including Irish stew, rump of Irish lamb, and locally made Glashry Farm ice-cream – award-winning flavors include Yellowman Honeycomb and Kilbeggen Irish Whiskey ice-cream. This five-star resort hotel also boasts 105 bedrooms and suites, plus a luxurious spa. www.hastingshotels.com/culloden-estate-and-spa

Where is it? In Northern Ireland, around a half-hour drive from Belfast.

7) The Roux family are legends within culinary circles. After a series of successful London restaurants, in 1972 brothers Michel and Albert Roux acquired a traditional English pub in the historic village of Bray. A 'restaurant with rooms' on the banks of the River Thames, **The Waterside Inn** is a three Michelin-star establishment serving inspirational French cuisine. Over four decades later, and with son Michel Jr now at the helm, it remains a beacon of gastronomy in Britain. After sampling exemplary haute cuisine, diners may retire to one of 11 individually decorated bedrooms and enjoy a more casual dining experience: there's a guest kitchen with coffee, tea and a do-it-yourself honesty bar, and in the morning a continental breakfast is served in your bedroom in true French style. www.waterside-inn.co.uk

Where is it? Bray is just over an hour's drive from London.

Dine out on any budget

You can eat well in Britain whatever your budget, so whether you're trying to make your pound stretch further or whether you're feeling lavish, pick from our extensive list of cheap eats, mid-range meals and where to splash the cash.

London

▪ Cheap eats - £

London is a collaboration of different cultures and a melting pot of great cuisines from around the world, particularly in its markets. Taste the Argentinian street food at Borough Market's **Porteña**, satisfy your sweet tooth at **Planet Pancake** in Greenwich Market, or get your pizza fix at **The Agile Rabbit** in Brixton Village.

www.boroughmarket.org.uk/porte-a,
www.greenwichmarketlondon.com/food-and-drink/detail/planet-pancake,
www.facebook.com/The-Agile-Rabbit



Be tempted by the many gourmet wares on offer at Greenwich Market

▪ Mid-range - ££

England's capital city is a magnet for stylish restaurants nurtured and perfected by celebrity chefs. Try pre- and post-theatre menus at Gordon Ramsay's **Heddon Street Kitchen** overlooking Regent Street's Food Quarter, Jamie Oliver's elegant and rustic **Fifteen** in Old Street, or Giorgio Locatelli's **Locanda Locatelli**; he is considered to be one of the best Italian chefs working in Britain.

www.gordonramsayrestaurants.com/heddon-street-kitchen, www.fifteen.net,
www.locandalocatelli.com

▪ Splash the cash - £££

If one Michelin star simply isn't enough, then maybe these two Michelin-star restaurants will suffice? Experience the lavish side of London's dining at **The Ledbury** in Notting Hill, classic French cuisine at **The Greenhouse**, or **The Square**, the well-established restaurant located in Mayfair.

www.theledbury.com, www.greenhouserestaurant.co.uk, www.squarerestaurant.com

Glasgow

▪ Cheap eats - £

Glasgow offers some great little places to dine on a budget, all complete with a 'does what it says on the tin' attitude. Try **Bread Meats Bread** for delicious burgers. There's the **Hillhead Bookclub** with a gloriously honest tone, even on the menu, 'things yer maw almost certainly does better' and 'no dish more than a tenner... ever'. For a real meaty experience, try **Meat Bar** for a protein-packed party full of chorizo, pulled-pork and smoked chicken.

www.breadmeatsbread.com, www.hillheadbookclub.co.uk, www.themeatbar.co.uk

- **Mid-range - ££**

If you're looking for something a little bit special, here's a few of the best restaurants who offer hearty yet stylish food in the Scottish city. **Tiffney's** is an expert on steak, and uses its own local dry-ageing store for its menu, meanwhile **The Gannet** serves traditional Scottish food that is 'dictated by the rhythms of the British seasons', or there's **Ox & Finch**, another meaty contender boasting the likes of confit hogget shoulder and black angus flank steak.

www.tiffneys.co.uk, www.thegannetgla.com, www.oxandfinch.com

- **Splash the cash - £££**

If you want to indulge just that little bit extra try **Bistro** at One Devonshire Gardens, where you can relax in the whisky snug and taste one of over 300 whiskies after enjoying your evening meal. Try the Gold Menu at the award-winning **Corinthian Club** for a luxury fine-dining experience, or go to **Rogano**, the oldest restaurant in Glasgow housed in a beautiful Art Deco building.



The super chic bar at One Devonshire Gardens, home of Bistro

www.luxuryscotland.co.uk/onedevonshire,
www.thecorinthianclub.co.uk, www.roganoglasgow.com

Cardiff

- **Cheap eats - £**

There's nothing better than tucking into some traditional Welsh comfort food in the heart of the country's capital, Cardiff. Even better, these cheap eats won't make your wallet shrink or, unfortunately, your waist-line. Indulge at **Madame Fromage**, where slow and unapologetically indulgent Welsh and Breton cuisine is served, have a lazy all-day breakfast at the ever popular **Servinis**, or get back to traditional cakes and lunch-time classics at the **Waterloo Tea House**.

www.madamefromage.co.uk, www.serviniscardiff.co.uk, <http://waterlootea.com/pages/tea-shops>

- **Mid-range - ££**

If you fancy something a little more eclectic, quirky Cardiff has some great culinary offerings which stride away from the ordinary. Try **The Clink**, an award-winning restaurant where prisoners are trained in hospitality and catering with an aim to reduce reoffending – the results are delicious; enjoy fine dining in a converted 19th-century church at **Chapel 1877**, or keep it simple at the **Burger and Lobster**, serving only... you guessed it burgers and lobster!

www.theclinkcharity.org/the-clink-restaurants/cardiff-wales, www.chapel1877.com,
www.burgerandlobster.com/home/locations/cardiff/the-hayes

- **Splash the cash - £££**

Dine with a view at **Restaurant James Sommerin** – the sweeping panorama over the Severn Estuary is beautiful – alternatively, enjoy the view of skilled chefs hard at work creating a 14-course menu just for you with the Chef’s Table. Located in a former bank vault, **The Potted Pig** is one of the best places in the city to... pig out! As well as tasty food, it’s a magnet for gin lovers, with an extensive selection of the spirit that can be whipped up into cocktails or served the classic way, with tonic.



Gorgeous views meet sumptuous food at Restaurant James Sommerin

www.jamessommerinrestaurant.co.uk, www.thepottedpig.com

Birmingham

- **Cheap eats - £**

Some of the best places to eat on a budget in Birmingham also offer takeaway, so you can enjoy a stroll round one of the local parks with some tasty food in hand. Every Friday the Digbeth Dining Club gathers for a street food fair extravaganza, where you can tuck into some sour dough pizza from **Spectacular Goat**, or chow down on some authentic Thai food from **Buddha Belly**. If you’re around the rest of the week **Habaneros** serves generous portions of Mexican food Monday to Friday and you can even buy their sauces to recreate the experience at home.

www.spectaculargoat.com, www.buddhabellystreetfood.co.uk, www.habvan.com

- **Mid-range - ££**

Although landlocked, the city of Birmingham is no stranger to authentic overseas cuisine. **Two Cats Kitchen** offers Baltic-Russian dishes which experiment with flavours from the north European hemisphere. Try **Sushi Passion**: run by a Polish chef and specialising in Japanese food, the experience and food is anything but ordinary. Voted best local restaurant by Gordon Ramsay, **Lasan** is renowned for its taste of India and comfortable setting.

www.twocatskitchen.com, www.facebook.com/Sushi-Passion, www.lasan.co.uk

- **Splash the cash - £££**

One of the foodie capitals of England, Birmingham naturally offers an array of fine-dining experiences. Indulge in the Tasting Menus at the Michelin-starred **Simpsons**, or at the Michelin-starred **Turners**, or immerse yourself in a contemporary British Dining Experience at **Adams**.



Enjoy stylish fine dining at Simpsons, one of Birmingham’s best

www.simpsonsrestaurant.co.uk,
www.turnersrestaurantbirmingham.co.uk,

www.adamsrestaurant.co.uk

Newcastle

▪ Cheap eats - £

There's nothing better than a Newcastle café to get your calorie fix for the day while staying on budget. **Quay Ingredient** is 'a small coffee house under a big bridge' that does humble café food well. For a good breakfast try **Ernest**, and if you like you can even stay for lunch, dinner, and then late-night dancing. If you have time to spare, stop by **The Settle Down Café** and enjoy mini pizzas, hot Thai soup or freshly baked cakes.

www.quayingredient.co.uk, www.weareernest.com, www.thesettledown.com

▪ Mid-range - ££

In Newcastle, fine-dining experiences can be found that don't have such a dramatic effect on your wallet. The **Silk Room** offers modern cuisine in a friendly environment and can be found at Newcastle's Quayside. Try celebrity Chef **Marco Pierre White's Steakhouse Bar & Grill** for a great dining experience that won't break the bank, or **Blackfriars** restaurant, housed in a 13th-century former medieval friary.

www.silkroom.co.uk, www.mpwrestaurants.com/restaurants/steakhouse-newcastle,
www.blackfriarsrestaurant.co.uk



One of Newcastle's hottest restaurants – House of Tides

www.artisannewcastle.com

▪ Splash the cash - £££

For a dining experience to remember, **House of Tides** is worth stopping by for the freshest ingredients served in comfortable surroundings. Venture into the **Jesmond Dene House Hotel**, Newcastle's only independently owned boutique hotel, for their tasting menu, or the bespoke tasting menu at Artisan, created especially for you by their award-winning Head Chef.

www.houseoftides.co.uk,
www.jesmonddenehouse.co.uk,

Edinburgh

▪ Cheap eats - £

In Edinburgh there are plenty of cosy and homely places to tuck into affordable, tasty food. Treat yourself to a fresh hog roast roll at **Oink Roast**, complete with crackling and apple sauce, or for proper Scottish comfort food, try **Mums'** haggis with a tower of mash. One not to miss is the **Edinburgh Larder**, where steamy windows and home-made comfort food are the order of the day.

www.oinkhogroast.co.uk, www.monstermashcafe.co.uk/menu, www.edinburghlarder.co.uk

- **Mid-range - ££**

The Scottish capital has a reputation for its excellent seafood offering, with fresh produce straight from the country's surrounding seas. Make a visit to **Loch Fyne**, which dates back to the 1890s. The welcoming seafood restaurant was once Newhaven's harbour fish market and even boasts a local fishing fleet on its doorstep. **Ondine** prides itself on its relaxed atmosphere and offers everything from proper fish and chips, to gourmet seafood platters. For a seafood lover classic, visit **The Mussel Inn**, tuck into a kilo pot of mussels accompanied by freshly baked crusty bread.

www.lochfyne seafood and grill.co.uk/locations/edinburgh, www.ondinerestaurant.co.uk, www.mussel-inn.com/seafood-restaurant-edinburgh

- **Splash the cash - £££**

For an extra lavish evening, eat at **The Pompadour**, a magnificent dining room at the Waldorf Astoria Edinburgh – The Caledonian. Try **The Kitchin**, a Michelin-starred restaurant housed in a converted warehouse with a philosophy of 'nature to plate'. There's also the marvellous **21212**, housed in a listed Georgian townhouse with an ever-evolving menu that changes weekly.

www.thepompadourbygalvin.com, www.thekitchin.com, www.21212restaurant.co.uk

Liverpool

- **Cheap eats - £**

Acclaimed as the city with an unrivalled musical heritage, and also boasting the largest collection of museums and art galleries outside of the capital, Liverpool seems to have a love for the humble sandwich too. Try the bacon, cheese, fig and dark chocolate sandwich at **Epicured**, or relax on the Chesterfield coach at **Onion** with a thick-cut ham sandwich. There's even an indulgent donut contender at **Portland Street 358** if you fancy something sweet.

www.epicuredliverpool.com, www.theoniondeli.com, www.portlandst.co.uk

- **Mid-range - ££**

For a restaurant with extra glitz and panache try **Malmaison's Liverpool Brasserie** where you can also enjoy views over the River Mersey, **Chaophraya**, where award-winning Thai Cuisine can be indulged on, or **Alma-de-Cuba**: a restaurant and bar located in the converted St Peter's Catholic Church, which is just as spectacular as it sounds.

www.malmaison.com/locations/liverpool/brasserie, www.chaophraya.co.uk/venues/chaophraya-liverpool, www.alma-de-cuba.com



Stylish setting, award-winning food – Liverpool's Chaophraya

- **Splash the cash - £££**

For a unique experience, sample the Tasting Menu of **The Art School Restaurant**, set in the lantern room of the Victorian 1888 'Home for Destitute children'. Venture into the village of Oxtun for a culinary journey at **Restaurant Fraiche**, or try the Gourmet Menu at **The Lawns Restaurant**.

www.theartschoolrestaurant.co.uk, www.restaurantfraiche.com,
www.thorntonhallhotel.com/menus

Manchester

- **Cheap eats - £**

Delve into Manchester's Northern Quarter, where you can find eclectic cuisines on a budget with matching atmospheres to boot. **Common** is an ever-popular late-night music bar offering a range of delicious foods that are purse-friendly; pop by and marvel at one of their exhibitions too. Try **This and That**, one Manchester's favourite curry houses and home of 'rice & three curries', or try **V Revolution**, the city's first vegan 'junk food' café'.

www.aplacecalledcommon.co.uk, www.thisandthatcafe.co.uk, www.vrevolution.co.uk

- **Mid-range - ££**

Manchester boasts a unique mix of inner city quays, mountain ranges and buildings whose ages span the centuries, best enjoyed paired with a superb dining experience. **Pier Eight** is The Lowry's new restaurant and bar, where views over Salford Quay can be enjoyed before a night at the theatre. Try afternoon tea with a view at **Cloud 23**, where floor-to-ceiling windows offer panoramic views across the northern city, or there's the **Second Floor Restaurant** by Harvey Nichols where vistas of Exchange Square can be taken in over lunch.

www.piereightrestaurant.co.uk/#pier-eight-restaurant-and-bar-the-lowry,
www.cloud23bar.com, www.harveynichols.com/restaurant/manchester-dining

- **Splash the cash - £££**

Manchester doesn't shy away from lavish dining experiences and **The French** is a shining example. Housed in the 1903 Midland Hotel, the gorgeous venue boasts meals to match, with exciting and adventurous menus served in a historic setting. Sample the tasting menu of **Manchester House**, where the Chef Patron Aiden Byrne is said to deliver his creations in unique and interesting ways, or if you're really adventurous, have the Chef's Signature Menu at the **Quill**, found on King Street.

www.the-french.co.uk, www.manchesterhouse.uk.com, www.quillmcr.co.uk

Chinese and Pan-Asian food in Britain

Britain has long embraced the influences of cuisines from around the globe into its thriving foodie culture. From the country's oldest Indian restaurant to glamorous Chinese establishments beloved by celebrities, we've selected some of the best Chinese and Pan-Asian restaurants in six of Britain's biggest cities.

London

If you like your food with a lavish serving of drama, head to **Sexy Fish** on London's exclusive Berkeley Square (www.sexyfish.com). The restaurant threw a celebrity-studded



Opulent décor and delicious dining at Sexy Fish

opening party last year, attended by the likes of Kate Moss, Lindsay Lohan and Anna Wintour, and the celebs keep on coming back. It's easy to see why. This is a theatrical place with an interior best described as serious mid-century glamour, filled with mermaid statues by Damien Hirst, an enormous sparkling crocodile by Frank Gehry, and Europe's largest Japanese whisky collection. The highly rated food is Japanese at heart, with influences from the seas of China, Japan and Thailand thrown in. Booking is essential.

Britain's lengthy obsession with Indian food is well documented, and Britain's oldest surviving Indian restaurant is **Veeraswamy**, overlooking London's Regent Street (www.veeraswamy.com). It was established in 1926 by the grandson of an English general and Indian princess and is still thriving today. *National Geographic* considers it one of the ten best destination restaurants in the world, and it ranks among the best restaurants in London.

For Michelin-starred Chinese cuisine, try **Hakkasan Hanway Place**, tucked behind Oxford Street in west London (<http://hakkasan.com>). It's an impressive affair of wooden screens, latticing and black-and-gold traditionally drawn panels, with signature dishes like Peking duck with caviar, and grilled wagyu beef with king soy sauce.

Nobu, on the first floor of The Metropolitan Hotel on London's Park Lane, was the first European venture of renowned Japanese chef Nobu Matsuhisa (www.noburestaurants.com). Its innovative, South American-influenced Japanese dishes are incredibly popular and have been awarded a Michelin star. Talented ex-Nobu chef Scott Hallsworth went on to set up **Kurobuta**, an *izakaya* restaurant fashioned after the traditional Japanese drinking establishments (www.kurobuta-london.com). There are three branches in Chelsea, Marble Arch and Harvey Nichols. Go to any one of them to fill up on delectable sushi, sashimi and Japanese 'junk food' such as wagyu beef sliders and BBQ kurobata pork ribs with honey-soy-ginger glaze.

Belfast, Northern Ireland

Nu Delhi Lounge is Belfast's best-reviewed curry house (www.nu-delhilounge.com). Its cosmopolitan mix of food, cocktails and super-cool but unobtrusive Bhangra music has given it almost destination status. Home-grown produce and old favourites are given a contemporary twist; think fresh local mussels in a Goan-style coconut sauce.

Cardiff, Wales

Mint and Mustard is Cardiff's most awarded restaurant, and one of only three Welsh restaurants awarded a Bib Gourmand by the esteemed Michelin Guide (www.mintandmustard.com). The brainchild of two UK-based Keralan doctors, Mint and Mustard serves up Keralan food that is "knock-your-block-off brilliant", according to *Tatler* magazine's food guide. Expect a mouth-watering array of South India's star dishes, such as Barbary duck and Kochi prawn mango curry.

For a wider range of Pan-Asian flavours in the Welsh capital, try **The Crispy Duck**, which draws on influences from Japan, China, Thailand and Malaysia (www.thecrispyduck.co.uk). There's an extensive range of yakitori and kushiyaki, yude mono, su mono, itame mono, sushi and of noodle and classic Cantonese dishes too.

Glasgow, Scotland

Glasgow's dining scene is bursting with diversity and dynamism. On a cobbled lane in the heart of the city's West End, **The Hanoi Bike Shop** has set the bar high as Glasgow's first Vietnamese restaurant (<http://hanoibikeshop.co.uk>). Hand-pressed organic tofu is made in-house every morning and the Vietnamese coffee is dripped into a glass of condensed milk. Dishes such as chilli glazed pork and crispy rice cakes, and Vietnamese five-spice barbequed chicken are made for two to share, so you can avoid food envy!



Fresh and authentic – The Hanoi Bike Shop is one of Glasgow's most popular addresses

Since it opened in the 1990s, **Mother India** has been a key player in the development of Indian cuisine in the city, and has expanded its portfolio to include a deli, dine-in options and **Mother India's Café**, which serves tapas-style Indian dishes (www.motherindia.co.uk). Discerning Glaswegians are known to queue outside branches of this institution on busy Friday and Saturday nights.

Manchester, north England

With such a concentration of superstar football players, it comes as no surprise that **Manchester** is home to some of Britain's most glamorous Chinese and Pan-Asian restaurants. In Spinningfields, the city's lively food and drink district, luxe restaurant **Tattu** draws inspiration for its remarkable décor from body art, and dishes up contemporary Chinese cuisine fused with traditional Asian flavours (www.tattu.co.uk). The presentation is exquisite, which is no more than you should expect from a restaurant that sourced its head

chef and head dim sum chef from London's Hakkasan.



Another impressive Spinningfields venue, **Scene, Indian Street Kitchen's** all-halal food is inspired by the Indo-Chinese and chaat dishes of the street food vendors of India, Pakistan and southern Asia; the theatre of the

Dine in style at Yu Alderley Edge, one of the north of England's most highly regarded restaurants

open-plan kitchen and huge wall mural of Agra train station will make you feel like you're not all that far from those colourful streets (www.scenedining.com).

Just outside Manchester is Alderley Edge, an exclusive village known as the champagne capital of Britain thanks to its famous residents, which have included footballers Dwight Yorke, Rio Ferdinand and David and Victoria Beckham. As well as the celebrities, you'll find **Yu Alderley Edge**, which was awarded a Tier 3 Pagoda Award at the 2016 Legacy of Taste awards, one of only six Chinese restaurants in the country to achieve such a standard and the only one outside London (yualderleyedge.com). With sumptuous surrounds and thoughtful dishes such as deconstructed crispy duck and pancakes, and a mouth-watering array of dim sum, you'll soon see why it's so highly regarded.

Birmingham, central England

And finally, no list of Britain's top Pan-Asian restaurants would be complete without mentioning Birmingham's legendary **Balti Triangle** (www.balti-birmingham.co.uk)! Located just to the south of Birmingham's city centre, this area is home to the city's highest concentration of balti restaurants, which includes some of the oldest in Britain. Try much-acclaimed **Adil** for proper Pakistani/Kashmiri baltis, replete with huge, pillowy table naan (www.adilbalti.co.uk).

Britain's vegetarian and vegan restaurants

Britain's vegetarian restaurants have gone mainstream! Their imaginative menus teem with dishes that will make your taste buds very happy indeed – whether you're vegetarian or not. Vegan restaurants are also surging in popularity, and chefs in all kinds of eateries across Britain are dedicating large portions of menu space to veggie-only meals, meaning it's easier than ever to eat out with friends and family of all foodie inclinations.

London's culinary scene is flourishing, and no one is left out. Among Britain's largest selection of vegetarian restaurants, seek out **Manna** in Primrose Hill (<http://mannav.com>). The capital city's oldest vegetarian restaurant has had plenty of time to fine-tune its menu, with dishes that will carry you around the world, from raw maki rolls to Thai green curry to



Let your hair down at London's healthiest bar, the buzzing Redemption

enchilada lasagne and organic bangers and mash; all the dishes are vegan too, and there's a great gluten-free choice.

For a night out that's free from almost everything apart from fun, try **Redemption**, which has branches in London's buzzing Notting Hill and Shoreditch areas (www.redemptionbar.com). "London's healthiest bar" serves up vegan, sugar-free and wheat-free food as well as some of the finest alcohol-free cocktails you'll ever taste; "spoil yourself without spoiling yourself", as they say!

For the kind of cuisine to win over steak eaters, head to the Michelin-recommended **Vanilla Black** in central London (www.vanillablack.co.uk). Their experimental vegetable-only cooking means their menu is populated with intriguing dishes such as Marmite dumplings, and salted and ash-baked celeriac and kale.

Fabulous as the capital is for meat-free dining, it's the seaside city of **Brighton** an hour by train south of London that really holds the hearts and minds of vegetarians. Fun-loving Brighton has been flying the flag for vegetarian dining in Britain for decades.

The elegant, award-winning **Food for Friends**, in the historic South Lanes, has been keeping vegetarians happy with flavoursome food since 1981 (www.foodforfriends.com). They use fresh, local and organic ingredients to create modern global-influenced dishes from vegetarian haggis with poached egg to Persian-spiced grilled aubergine, dried lime and tomato timbale, and a sinful array of desserts.

The city's **Terre à Terre** is just as much of a local institution (www.terreaterre.co.uk). This iconic restaurant claims to have a high percentage of loyal non-vegetarian customers. The menu reflects the travel-loving owners' magpie tendencies, with the brightest ingredients and flavours plucked from around the world so you can start with peeking buns, feast on cheese and pickle gnocchi and finish with churrosimo.

Bristol, in south-west England, is another strong contender for Britain's capital of vegetarianism. The city was European Green Capital 2015 and its bohemian, forward-thinking nature goes hand-in-hand with vegetarian restaurant culture food. **VegFest**, a

festival that combines serious veganism with a rock'n'roll atmosphere, started here in 2003 before spreading to Brighton, London and Glasgow (<http://vegfest.co.uk>).

Maitreya Social in Bristol's bustling cultural quarter was one of the first on the city's now well-established vegetarian restaurant scene (www.cafemaitreya.co.uk). This cosy space mixes hearty, contemporary vegetarian food with live music and local art exhibitions – catering for body, mind and soul!

Named after the year the Vegetarian Society was formed, **1874** (www.by1847.com) pairs top-notch veggie, vegan and gluten-free fare such as 'fish & chips' (with cider-battered halloumi), and oyster medallions with warm asparagus, quinoa and roasted garlic sauce, plus an extensive selection of vegan wine and botanically-based cocktails. You'll find it in the heart of Bristol, and there are branches in Birmingham, Brighton and Manchester too.

Scotland's vegetarian and vegan offering is equally impressive. **Edinburgh** was named by PETA as Britain's Most Vegan-Friendly City in 2015, snatching the title from Glasgow. David Bann and Henderson's are the connoisseurs of the city's deep-rooted vegetarian dining scene. Find luxury, high-end vegetarian dining at **David Bann**, just off the Royal Mile, which has been going for more than 50 years (www.davidbann.com). Within its deep aubergine-coloured walls you can feast on the likes of chilli pancake with grilled sweet potato, courgette and chocolate sauce.

Trailblazing **Henderson's** took Edinburgh by storm when it opened in 1962 and is still going strong, with an expanding portfolio of restaurants, a deli and a shop (www.hendersonsofedinburgh.co.uk). Arrive early for breakfast, or show up later for one of their wholesome salads and healthy mains.

And although they're not dedicated vegetarian restaurants, you'll find super vegetarian tasting menus at top Edinburgh restaurants **Martin Wishart** (www.restaurantmartinwishart.co.uk) and **The Kitchin** (thekitchin.com), which both have Michelin stars.

The Welsh capital **Cardiff** has some top-notch vegetarian restaurants for a lunchtime bite or an evening meal. Eclectic and artsy **Milgi** is a wholesome mix of vegetarian food, gallery exhibitions and art installations (<http://milgicardiff.com>). The focus here is on creating satisfying and flavour-rich dishes – think butternut squash and sage burgers, tortilla stacks and beer-battered halloumi.



Make yourself at home at Belfast's Home, who boast an extensive veggie and vegan menu

In **Belfast**, Northern Ireland, you can choose from the myriad temptations on **Home's** extensive and exciting vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free menus: wild mushroom linguine with wilted greens and parmesan; whipped goats cheese with beetroot, apple, candied walnuts, chicory and balsamic syrup; or Vietnamese rice noodle salad with mango and chilli, for example (www.homebelfast.co.uk).

Reputedly Northern Ireland's best Indian restaurant, **Archana** isn't exclusively meat-free, but it attracts vegetarian diners (www.archana.co.uk). Its menu,

which specialises in authentic Balti-style cooking, has more than 40 veggie-friendly dishes. And for a sign of just how accommodating this family run restaurant is, check out the dishes in “The Usual” part of the menu. It’s a select range of dishes from the usual menu with the small twists requested by Archana’s regulars; Tom clearly likes his Veg Feast with added spice!

Five more of the best vegan restaurants in Britain

1. **Mono, Glasgow:** This café bar mixes vegan cuisine with exhibitions, book readings, art performances and workshops (www.monocafebar.com).
2. **VBites Café & Store, Brighton:** Vegan food and drinks to eat in or take away, from hearty breakfasts to hickory chick burgers and knickerbocker glories (www.vbites.com).
3. **Henderson’s Vegan, Edinburgh:** This new vegan outlet is the latest offering from Edinburgh’s vegetarian institution (www.hendersonsofedinburgh.co.uk).
4. **222 VeggieVegan, London:** Don’t be misled by the name – the food here is 100% vegan, from the 222 burger to the pumpkin and pine nut risotto (www.222veggievegan.com).
5. **Anna-Loka, Cardiff:** The Welsh capital’s first 100% vegan café also serves four different flavours of kombucha tea (www.anna-loka.com).

18 great and green eating experiences

As more chefs strive to put local produce at the forefront of menus and source meat and fish sustainably, it's easy to dine in an ethical and eco-friendly way in Britain.

1. Catch and cook fish like a pro, River Cottage Cookery School, Plymouth, Devon, south-west England

British chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall was named Sustainability Hero of the Year in 2015 by the Sustainable Restaurant Association. His restaurant and cookery school, the River Cottage, is a food-fan's haven thanks to delicious menus, convivial Friday night suppers and fun hands-on cookery experiences, and it's on its way to being a zero-carbon site. Book a 'Catch and Cook' day and learn about the joys of sustainable fishing first-hand out on the south Devon waters, before coming back to prepare your catch, cook it to perfection and enjoy. Sustainable and satisfying! www.rivercottage.net/cookery-courses/fish/catch-and-cook

Catch and Cook takes place off the coast of Plymouth, which is around a three-hour train journey from London.



Eat and drink organic at The Duke of Cambridge

2. Sample an organic cocktail, Duke of Cambridge, north London

Britain's first and only certified organic pub, The Duke of Cambridge, is a green-eating and gourmet-lover's dream wrapped up in one cosy spot. The London gastropub serves a seasonably varying menu that features 100% organic ingredients; inventive dishes may include beetroot, orange and black pepper soup or a classic roast with the freshest trimmings. Beer drinkers can peruse a menu of independent craft-brewed beers, wines are organic and biodynamic, and Britain's first organic cocktail list is a tempting one, featuring small, independent organic spirit producers.

<http://dukeorganic.co.uk>

The nearest underground station is Angel.

3. Fish and chips in a pirate ship, Am Birlinn, Isle of Mull, west coast of Scotland

Ok, it's not actually a pirate ship, but the amazing Am Birlinn closely resembles a vessel you'd take to the waves in, and there's a pirate ship-themed playground outside for children to run wild. Within, chefs transform the day's catch into delicious, memorable dishes, from the classic fish and chips with home-made tartare sauce to Tuscan seafood soup. Am Birlinn is one of the highest-rated restaurants for sustainability by the Fish2Fork guide, who were wowed by the staff's ability to tell you where each and every fish came from – either because they caught it themselves, or friends on the island did. The menu begins with a list of suppliers and where they're based, with pork sourced from just two miles (3.2km) away and haggis from ten miles away (16km).

www.ambirlinn.com

Am Birlinn is a 45 minute drive from Craignure, which is 45 minutes by ferry from Oban; Oban is just over three hours from Glasgow by train.

4. Cook at the chicest farm in Britain, Daylesford, Gloucestershire, west England

Daylesford is one of the most sustainable farms in Britain, and it's also one of the most fashionable; it's had a pop-up restaurant on the rooftop of Selfridges in London and celebrities including Kate Moss buy groceries at its shop. Head to Daylesford's Cotswolds headquarters to take a course in anything from 'Seasonal Dinner Parties' to 'The Raw Kitchen'. If you prefer not to get your hands dirty, relax and dine on delicious Daylesford produce at the restaurant before or after a luxury spa treatment or meditation class at the onsite Bamford Day Spa. No time to head to the countryside? Feast on fresh produce at one of the three Daylesford restaurants in London.



Cook like a seasonal pro at Daylesford

<http://daylesfordcookeryschool.co.uk>,
<http://daylesford.com/locations>

Daylesford farm and cookery school is in Kingham, Gloucestershire, just under two hours' drive from London.

5. Enjoy an eco-friendly afternoon tea, Orchard Acre Farm, Irvinestown, Northern Ireland

Orchard Acre Farm scooped an award at the Irish Responsible Tourism Awards thanks to its holistic approach to food production and passionate commitment to using local produce. As Orchard Acre Farm's team says, you've probably travelled further to get there than your food has! Once arrived at the idyllic eco-barn, surrounded by fruit trees and wandering chickens, settle in for a sumptuous afternoon tea followed by a tour of the beautiful garden. There are also bread and butter making courses, a 'catch of the day' course and a summer festival that starts with foraging and finishes with a barbeque!



Cook and then feast at Orchard Acre Farm in Northern Ireland

www.orchardacrefarm.co.uk

Orchard Acre Farm is around a 90-minute drive from Belfast.

6. Find your new favourite eco-friendly hangout, CF24, Cardiff, Wales

Dubbed an 'eco-friendly hangout', CF24 is one of the Welsh capital's friendliest and funkier places to eat, drink, take in an art exhibition and party. The menu features pizzas, burgers, sandwiches and salads, with all-Welsh meat. You can drink with a clear conscience too, as CF24 uses Elephant Gin – proceeds of which go towards conserving wildlife in Africa – and is Cardiff's first bar to serve beer from Big Hug Brewing, who work with a charity that ensures long term security for our natural resources. www.cf24project.com

Cardiff is a two-hour train journey from London.



Multigrain porridge at Grain Store – what a healthy way to start your day!

7. Let the vegetable lead the way, Grain Store, Kings Cross, London

Chef Bruno Loubet has radically rethought the way we see food at Grain Store, giving the vegetables equal – if not higher – status to meat. That's not the only tick for sustainability – given that meat production uses up more natural resources – but where meat is used it is organic and free range. Aside from all that? The food is delicious, the atmosphere buzzing and the cocktails are made from all manner of interesting ingredients, from pea shoot syrup to cashew paste.

www.grainstore.com

The nearest Underground station is King's Cross.

8. A sustainable gourmet getaway, The Traddock, Yorkshire, north England

Family run hotel The Traddock offers excellent British hospitality at its beautifully decorated country house. It won a Gold award from the Green Tourism Business Scheme, the highest green accolade possible for a Hotel in Britain and is home to an organic restaurant, where ingredients are sourced within a 50-mile (80km) radius. Arrive hungry, because you won't want to miss out on any of the courses offered at the 2AA Rosette restaurant. Breakfast is another delicious affair, with home-made jams and locally sourced black puddings. If that's not enough, you can also have afternoon tea in the patio overlooking the Yorkshire Dales or take a gourmet hamper out on a walk with you, featuring local cheeses, ham, award-winning pies, chutneys, chocolate, fruitcake, fruit and lemonade!

www.thetraddock.co.uk

The Traddock is in Austwick, around a 90-minute drive from Manchester.

9. Superb, sustainable seafood, Gamba, Glasgow, Scotland

One of Glasgow's best-loved restaurants by locals and visitors alike, Gamba was the first in the city to join the Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA) and has held three stars as a Sustainability Champion in the SRA awards since 2012. Fish is sourced sustainably and 'cooked with respect' using fresh seasonal experiences, with Isle of Gigha halibut, Scottish lobster and Scottish smoked salmon from Marrbury just a few of the menu's stars.

www.gamba.co.uk

Glasgow is an hour by train from Edinburgh.

10. Zero waste, maximum taste, SILO, Brighton, south-east England

Britain's first zero-waste eatery opened in 2014 and has been nourishing customers with its 'pre-industrial food system' ever since. Head over for breakfast – porridge is made using activated grains and almond milk – or a delicious à la carte lunch, or choose between the 'omnivore' or 'herbivore' set menu at dinner time. The Old Tree brewery concocts fermented drinks using foraged and intercepted plants, while SILO's own flour mill is responsible for the taste bread, and butter is churned on site. www.silobrighton.com

Brighton is an hour by train from London.

11. Dine at a prison, The Clink, HMP Brixton, south London

Ethical considerations are at the heart of The Clink, a restaurant located inside HMP Brixton prison where patrons can dine on locally-sourced, seasonal food knowing their visit is



The gardens at The Clink, where much of the delicious produce served originates from

contributing to a very high success rate in reducing reoffending. Quite an achievement in itself, before we even consider their environmental impact, with much of the produce coming from prison gardens in Surrey and Wales, home to 90 woodland chickens, Welsh Black cattle, a dozen beehives – the honey infused by nearby lavender fields – and a greenhouse heated by biodiesel converted from fryer oil. All branches of The Clink scrupulously recycle glass, cans and cardboard and compost all food waste.

www.theclinkcharity.org

12. Take a cookery class at The Wellbeing Farm, north-west England

The Wellbeing Farm is the brainchild of Celia Gaze, who quit her stressful job to pursue a life of rural tranquility. It is the perfect setting in which to learn the farmhouse cookery school's 'field to fork' ethos. While the kitchen boasts premium appliances from De Dietrich, which use the latest energy-saving equipment, the school is also powered by a wind turbine. Seasonality, composting and sustainability are all covered on the courses and the food is either sourced from local suppliers or the farm itself. Hands-on courses include entertaining, children's cookery, cheese-making, raw food and Thai, and could see participants collecting eggs from the chickens for a recipe, picking herbs and vegetables from the polytunnel or going out to meet the farm animals to learn about the rearing process.

www.thewellbeingfarm.co.uk

Wellbeing Farm is just down the lane from the moorland village of Edgworth, 20 minutes from Manchester, itself just over two hours from London by train.

13. Tuck into sustainable fish and chips at Lussmanns Fish and Grill, St Albans, south-east England

A classic British dining experience: freshly cooked, piping-hot fish and chips, smothered in salt and soused with vinegar, wrapped in newspaper is a simple pleasure that is sadly under threat from over-fishing. Fear not, the traditional fish supper can be enjoyed guilt-free at Lussmanns Fish and Grill. Provenance and sustainability are both key to the food served at this smart eatery from the first restaurant group



Sustainable and sumptuous – dine at MSC-certified seafood restaurant Lussmanns Fish and Grill

outside London to use only MSC-certified seafood.

www.lussmanns.com

St Albans is 20 minutes by train from central London.

14. Learn to forage for wild food around Britain

Wild food offers the ultimate in local and seasonal produce. Foraging fans claim it inspires a greater appreciation of the land and our place in the natural cycles and rhythms of life. On a course or walk around locations in Britain including Devon, London, Oxford and Sussex, foragers are shown how to identify wild edible plants, as well as learn the different plant stories, their nutritional values, folklore and history. Retreats and courses are run by Robin Harford, author of *The Eat Weeds Cookbook*, who takes groups on foraging adventures that have won praise from BBC *Good Food Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *The Lady* and *GQ* magazine.

www.foragingcourses.com

15. A cafe with conscience in Northern Ireland

If tucking into a veggie Yumm Bowl (a rice dish with butter beans, salsa, cheddar, tomato, olives, guacamole, sour cream, coriander and special yumm sauce) and sipping on a FairTrade coffee while sprawled out on a rug in Belfast's only community garden sounds enticing, Common Grounds café is a must-visit. A social enterprise with real heart, they have donated profits of £60,000 to relief development projects in the developing world and throw open their doors every Christmas day to provide turkey dinners and cheer for those down on their luck. Winners of Belfast's Best Fairtrade Café two years in a row, ethically sourced food and a laid-back vibe reflect their values of hospitality, justice, generosity and compassion.

www.commongrounds.co.uk

Belfast is just over an hour's flight from London.

16. Help out on Croeso Treberfedd organic farm, west Wales

Voted best 'Organic Place to Stay in the UK' in 2014 Soil Association Organic Awards, Treberfedd, near the sweeping coastline of Cardigan Bay, is surrounded by 60 acres of



organic farm. Visitors can collect free range eggs from the hens, BBQ seasonal organic beef and lamb and even buy organic knitting wool from the farm shop. Anyone interested in learning how to keep their own sheep can take part in a one-day course for smallholders. Stay in a restored 17th-century thatched cottage with original wall paintings or one of the new eco builds with turf roof houses crafted into the landscape of organic meadows.

www.treberfedd.co.uk

Get hands on at Treberfedd organic farm

Treberfedd is around two hours' drive from Cardiff.

17. Take a tour of Sedlescombe Biodynamic Vineyard in east Sussex, south-east England

Designed so that the vineyards are in tune with the earth's rhythms, biodynamic methods are enjoying a revival and one of the Britain's true eco-pioneers, Roy Cook, can be found in rural east Sussex. In late 2010 Sedlescombe became the first vineyard to release 'Biodynamic' English Wine and today visitors can see organic and bio-dynamic farming in action on a tour. Traversing three vineyards, ancient woodland and the winery, it's then on to the 'Bar-in-the-Barn' for the tasting of a range of unique whites, red and sparkling wines.

www.englishorganicwine.co.uk

Sedlescombe is around a 90-minute drive from central London.

18. Pick up local produce from a farmer's market in Edinburgh, Scotland

Scotland's farmer's markets have become a staple of life for locals and tourists who care about where their food comes from. One to try is the award-winning Edinburgh Farmers' Market, which takes place under the imposing backdrop of Edinburgh Castle every Saturday. A hugely popular market with up to 60 stalls, you can stock up on mouth-watering seafood, sample cheese and artisan chocolates, homemade jams, pickles, breads and locally brewed craft beer. Visit on the first Saturday of every month and join the Slow Food stall when a local chef cooks up something simple and delicious, showcasing ingredients from the market.

www.edinburghfarmersmarket.co.uk

Edinburgh is just over four hours by train from London.

Britain's freshest fish and seafood

Britain's fishing industry goes back thousands of years. Today, many fishing communities have disappeared but Britain's seafood remains world class. Scotland's Peterhead, Shetland and Fraserburgh and south-west England's Brixham and Plymouth are Britain's biggest fishing ports, which is why you will find some of the best seafood restaurants there – and that's just for starters. Whitstable in Kent, south-east England, and Northern Ireland are famous for oysters, Selsey in west Sussex, south-east England for crab, south Wales for cockles and Whitby in north Yorkshire claims to be home to the tastiest fish and chips.

South-west England

You will find shoals of fish markets and excellent seafood restaurants in Devon and Cornwall. Feast on Brixham clams, Salcombe crab, Elberry Cove mussels and Bigbury oysters – swallow them whole with a squeeze of lemon at the **Oyster Shack** (www.oystershack.co.uk).

Tuck into whole soft-shell crab at Mitch Tonks **Rockfish** restaurants in Plymouth and Dartmouth, the latter hosting a lively crab festival each year (www.therockfish.co.uk). In Cornwall, chef **Rick Stein** dishes up platters of langoustines, oysters and sashimi and tasty fish and chips at his restaurants in Padstow and Newquay (www.rickstein.com).

In addition to seafood, the waters of south-west England are rich in fish such as turbot, sea bass, Dover Sole and omega-rich mackerel.

South-east England

Selsey and Shoreham in west Sussex have two of the few remaining fishing fleets on the south coast. To buy freshly caught plaice, crab and succulent lobster, head to the wooden huts on Selsey's east beach. At Hastings (east Sussex) and Hythe (Kent), inshore fishing boats land their catches daily for sale on the beach.

Oysters and Whitstable in Kent go hand in hand. Try them at **Whealers Oyster Bar** in the town centre, or buy them – and a wide variety of other seafood – at the **Whitstable Fish Market** on the South Quay, where fishing boats and lobster pots bob about in the harbour (www.wheelersoysterbar.com). Go in summer and enjoy the barbecue, or buy a pot of whelks or cockles – they're delicious with vinegar and pepper. The **Whitstable Oyster festival** takes place every summer (www.whitstableoysterfestival.co.uk).



Sample different varieties of oyster at the dedicated Whitstable Oyster Festival

Wales

Cockles are big business on the Gower Peninsula mud flats in south Wales. Try the small saltwater clams with laverbread (seaweed jelly) – it's a Welsh delicacy and they're extremely nutritious as well. You can buy them at Swansea's **indoor market**, along with 40 other varieties of fish (www.visitwales.com).

You won't find seafood any fresher than catching your own – and a north Wales **lobster safari** will show you how to do just that. If you prefer your lobster on a plate, the **Twnti** restaurant, Pwllheli, on the beautiful Llyn Peninsula, serves them with garlic butter along with dishes of local king scallops and crab. For fishy feasts and competitions, visit Cardigan Bay's popular **Seafood Festival** in Aberaerom, mid Wales, in July (www.visitmidwales.co.uk).

Scotland

Scotland's salmon – wild and smoked – trout and shellfish are world renowned but the hand-dived scallops from the Isle of Mull and crab and lobster from Dunbar are equally delicious. There's even a **Seafood Trail**, which takes you to the best seafood restaurants on the west coast and its islands including Arran, Mull and Skye (www.theseafoodtrail.com).

A favourite with royalty and celebrities, the **Loch Fyne Oyster Bar** in Cairndow, 56 miles (90km) north-west of Glasgow, dishes up salmon – smoked and gin-cured – crispy oysters with horseradish and hand-dived Tarbert scallops. There's also a deli so you can take some seafood away with you (www.lochfyne.com).

On Scotland's south-east coast, the **Lobster Shack** at North Berwick harbour delivers lobster al fresco, grilled to perfection with garlic and herb butter.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland's seafood – succulent langoustines, oysters, turbot, plaice and smoked wild salmon – is as beautiful and it is bountiful.

For fish with a twist, visit **The Boathouse** in Bangor, 13 miles (21km) east of Belfast, which was voted best restaurant in County Down in Ireland's 2016 Food Oscars. It dishes up top-notch Dover sole with Goatsbridge Irish caviar, orange oil and cauliflower foam and Copeland Island crab. There's also a tasting menu (www.theboathouseni.co.uk).

In Belfast, the **Mourne Seafood Bar** delivers top quality oysters – try them Japanese style or au natural with mignonette dressing and lemon (www.mourneseafood.com).

North England

Whitby and Scarborough in north Yorkshire have some of the best fish and chips in Britain – light, crispy and served piping hot from the deep fat fryer. **The Magpie Cafe**, close to the harbour in Whitby, a 90-minute drive from the city of York, is known throughout Yorkshire for its tasty fish and chips and seafood chowder; the long queues outside testament to its popularity (www.magpiecafe.co.uk). Monster-size haddock comes from its own fishmongers, which also supplies fish to the locals of Whitby.



Northumberland is proudly known for its Craster kippers

On the north-east coast of England in Blyth, Northumberland, **Coastline Fish & Chips** serves some of the tastiest meals along with a hefty dollop of their home-made ice creams (www.coastlinefishandchips.co.uk).

9 mouth-watering food markets

From buffalo burgers to Welsh cakes, Scottish whisky liqueurs and Bury black pudding to Brummie Balti curries, you will find a host of surprises at the food markets of Britain, as well as plenty of locally sourced quality produce. Mingle with local communities, get cooking tips from stall holders or relax with a coffee and listen to live music - it's more than a shopping trip, it's also a great day out.



Try tasty British flavours and delicacies from around the world at a food market

Borough Market, Southwark, London

London's oldest market (13th century), situated close to Southwark Cathedral, is a gourmet's paradise. Here, celebrity chefs and locals seek out gourmet goodies from its 150 stalls - artisan breads, hand-made Melton Mowbray pork pies, Colchester Native and Gigas oysters, Essex goats milk ice cream, Russian rye breads and fresh Italian truffles. Arrive hungry! Tasters are handed out liberally and there's plenty to enjoy on the go - Argentine street food, Balkan borek (pastry parcels) and Ethiopian misir wot (aromatic lentil stew). Take home handmade fudge and honeycomb from artisan confectioner, Whirld. Open daily except Sundays and events are held throughout the year (www.boroughmarket.org.uk).

Broadway Market, Hackney, London

Vintage wine vies with vintage fashion at London's trendiest market, tucked away in a small East End street between Regent's Canal and London Fields. Home to market traders since the 1890s, this Saturday market is a food-lover's paradise. The 135 stalls, shops and cafés sell everything from locally baked bread, cupcakes, falafel wraps, spices, cheeses and street food to Vietnamese coffee (Ca Phe VN), gluten-free fish tacos (Mission Marisco) and paleo street food (Feed Me Primal). Once you've had your fill of food, check out the vintage clothing and locally designed arts and crafts shops nearby (www.broadwaymarket.co.uk).

Winchester Farmers' Market, Hampshire, south England

Freshness is guaranteed at England's biggest farmers' market, held on the second and last Sunday of each month, a stone's throw from the magnificent 15th-century cathedral. All 95 producers sell food that comes from Hampshire, 70 miles (113km) west of London, or within a ten-mile radius of its border. The huge variety of stalls sell everything from buffalo and goat meat to Hampshire honey ice cream and smoked fish. Tuck into a tasty barbecued buffalo burger, Hog Roast (pork) or a salt beef sandwich, washed down with spiced mulled wine or freshly pressed apple juice. In summer, buy artisan breads and cheeses for a picnic on the river bank (www.visitwinchester.co.uk).

Moseley Farmers' Market, Birmingham, central England

This lively Brummie market, which takes place in Moseley village on the last Saturday of the month (9am to 2pm), 90 minutes by train from London.. Voted Best UK Farmers' Market by FARMA for the third time, the market is renowned for the freshness, variety and value of its produce, which is guaranteed to be local and reared, grown or processed by the people who sell it. Chat to the stallholders or farmers and find out how to prepare and cook the foods you

buy. Experience the community vibe as you stroll, sampling local cheeses, succulent pulled pork or a world-famous Brummie Balti curry on the go (www.moseleyfarmersmarket.org.uk).

Edinburgh Farmers' Market, Scotland

Enjoy a taste of Scotland at this 15-year-old weekly market situated within the shadow of beautiful Edinburgh castle (www.edinburghfarmersmarket.co.uk). Tuck into hot venison and pulled venison rolls, Isle of Arran cheeses, speciality scotch eggs and artisan cheese toasties. Take home a sweet treat from the Marshmallow Lady - choose from the vanilla bean, cookie and cream or chocolate flavours - whisky liqueurs from Scots Cheer or a hand-knitted Shetland jumper, made with wool from Kate Sharp's sheep and hand-spun using traditional treadle spinning wheels.

Swansea Market, south Wales

Early birds to Wales' largest indoor market in the city centre can enjoy a Welsh fry-up of laverbread (seaweed) with bacon, as well as Welsh cakes fresh off the griddle and traditional Bara Planc (chewy bakestone bread) (www.swanseaindoormarket.co.uk). More than 100 stalls offer local and European produce, from Gower cockles to Italian salamis, alongside gifts and jewellery. Relax with a gourmet coffee at one of six cafés, or enjoy a Thai curry on the go. Buy a traditional souvenir to take home with you from the Welsh Stall - an intricately-carved love spoon, or maybe a Welsh costume or china.

St Nicholas Market, Bristol, south-west England

There's a market to satisfy every taste at St Nicks, as it is affectionately known. Home to a huge array of independent retailers, it also hosts a farmers' market (Wednesdays 9.30am - 2.30pm), street food market (Wednesdays and Fridays 10am-4pm) and night market (first Friday of every month except August). Enjoy British and international flavours in the Glass Arcade - Algerian falafels at Eat a Pitta, English sausages at Bristol Sausage Shop, Caribbean jerk wraps and heavenly pastel de nata (custard tarts) at Portuguese Taste. For local produce, visit the farmers' and night markets, where DJs and live performers provide the beat to buy fresh beets (www.stnicholasmarketbristol.co.uk).

Bury Market, Lancashire, north-west England

Described as a 'veritable souk of the north', this market, 12 miles (19km) north of Manchester, has been entertaining shoppers for 500 years. With 300 stalls and a host of multicultural cafés, the Open Market offers everything from Greek mezes and fish and chips to the local Bury black pudding served hot or cold with lashings of mustard or piccalilli (spiced pickled vegetables). Buy one to take home with you from a delicatessen in the Market Hall, or browse the many gift shops. For entertainment, head to the noisy Fish and Meat Hall, where stallholders compete in shouting out their daily deals (www.burymarket.com).

St George's Market, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Foodies will find one of the best seafood selections in Northern Ireland at this weekly weekend Victorian market, built in the 1890s. The Friday Variety Market, established in 1604, features 248 stalls including 23 fish stalls, beef from Armagh and wild boar. On Saturdays, the food and craft market adds an international flavour, with Spanish tapas and buttery French crêpes, while live music ups the tempo with performances from local bands. On Sundays (10am-4pm), local craftspeople join the food stallholders with a selection of

handmade goods including scented candles, jewellery, spices, chutneys and chocolates (www.belfastcity.gov.uk/tourism-venues/stgeorgesmarket).

A cheese tour of Britain

Cheshire is one of the most ancient of British cheeses. Thought to date back to Roman times, it was even mentioned in the Domesday Book, a survey of Britain completed in 1086 for King William the Conqueror.

According to The British Cheese Board, today there are more than 700 different cheeses produced in the UK, including several varieties of Cheddar, Caerphilly, Double Gloucester, Lancashire, Red Leicester, Stilton and Wensleydale. Not forgetting speciality cheeses such as Cornish Yarg, Gallybagger from the Isle of Wight and Gloucestershire's pungent Stinking Bishop. Metaphorically speaking, you can eat your way around Britain in cheeses. To whet your appetite, here's a slice of what you can expect. www.britishcheese.com



Pick up some British cheese and pack up a picnic!

England

Blue Stilton... Britain's best known blue cheese has strong, tangy flavour. Shot through with blue veins, it has a semi-hard texture that's creamy yet crumbly.

Authentic Blue Stilton is made in six dairies from the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. Dating back to at least the 17th century, its earliest origins are unknown, but around 1743 it was popularised by the landlord of The Bell Inn in the town of Stilton in neighbouring Cambridgeshire, from where is derived its name. Visitors can still dine on Stilton cheese at the Inn's first-floor restaurant, recommended by the *Michelin Guide*, just two hours' drive north of London. The Inn dates back to 1642 and highwayman Dick Turpin is said to have made a dramatic escape, by leaping onto his horse Black Bess from one of its windows. www.thebellstilton.co.uk, www.stiltoncheese.co.uk

Cheddar... From smooth and mild to sharp and tangy, the taste of this hard yellow cheese has hints of caramelised milk and hazelnuts. It's available in a varieties ranging from Mild to Extra Mature and Vintage, tasting stronger the longer it is 'matured'.

The cheese originated in the sleepy village of Cheddar, Somerset, in south-west England, where it's been produced since the 12th century. Only one cheese producer remains in the area today; The Cheddar Gorge Cheese Company, which won silver and bronze medals for their cheeses at The British Cheese Awards in 2015. www.cheddargorgecheeseco.co.uk

One of the Britain's most popular cheeses, cheddar is now produced around the world. However, only cheeses from the neighbouring counties of Somerset, Devon, Dorset and Cornwall are labelled as authentic West Country Farmhouse Cheddar. You can buy it in

most shops and supermarkets, but why not visit the Somerset farm shops of award-winning makers such as the Gould and Keen families. www.gouldscheddar.co.uk, www.keenscheddar.co.uk

Wensleydale...Mild, clean, and slightly sweet, Wensleydale cheese has a subtle flavour, said to have notes of wild honey and a moist but crumbly texture.

Produced in Wensleydale, north Yorkshire in the north of England since the 14th century, it was originated by the French Cistercian monks who founded the region's Jervaulx Abbey in 1156. You can visit the Abbey ruins near Ripon. www.jervaulxabbey.com

Today, the Wensleydale Creamery is the only manufacturer of proper Yorkshire Wensleydale. Among its 400 awards, the creamery scooped the Super Gold prize for its Wensleydale Blue at the 2015 World Cheese Awards. Go along to explore the visitor centre, museum and shop, attend demonstrations and tastings, and dine on home-made dishes – some made from Wensleydale – at the coffee shop or restaurant. www.wensleydale.co.uk

Scotland

Carrick...Mild and creamy, this popular unpasteurised hard yellow cheese is sweet and flavourful.

You'll find Carrick on menus around Scotland, but one local brand to seek out is Finlay's Farmhouse, which won Best UK Organic Cheese for its Traditional Carrick cheese at the 2015 Nantwich International Cheese Awards. Watch cheese making and buy stocks to take home from Finlay's Cream o' Galloway Farm & Visitor Centre in Rainton; about two hours' drive south-west of Glasgow. You'll find its produce on sale around Dumfries & Galloway, including at The Masonic Arms restaurant in the riverside town of Gatehouse of Fleet, about two hours' drive south of Glasgow. www.creamogalloway.co.uk, www.masonicarms.co.uk

Northern Ireland

Ballyoak...Mild, smoky and creamy to taste, Europe's first smoked brie has a silky, butter-like texture. It's slowly kiln-smoked using oak wood at the Fivemiletown Creamery in the Clogher Valley. Established in 1898, it's famous for soft cheeses, speciality cheddars and goat's cheese and also makes Ballyblue, one of Northern Ireland's oldest blue cheeses. Exported across Europe and North America, Fivemiletown's produce is available online, from selected shops and often on the menu of the Hilton Belfast. Among many awards, Ballyoak scored golds at the World Cheese Awards in 2002 and 2005.

www.fivemiletowncheese.com, www3.hilton.com/hilton-belfast

Wales

Caerphilly...White, mild and slightly salty with a delicious buttermilk flavour and crumbly texture, Caerphilly's sits halfway between ricotta and cheddar. It originates from the town of Caerphilly, south Wales – half an hour by train from Cardiff – and celebrated with a free annual festival called The Big Cheese, 29-30 July 2016. www.caerphilly.gov.uk/bigcheese

Trethowan's Dairy, the manufacturer of Gorwydd Caerphilly scoped a gold award at the 2013 British Cheese Awards for its Traditional Caerphilly and recently moved from Wales to

Somerset. Exported to Europe, USA, Canada, New Zealand and Japan, you'll find its cheese at outlets including London's Neal's Yard Dairy and a small Borough Market stall.

www.nealsyarddairy.co.uk, www.boroughmarket.org.uk

Britain's chocolate story

For those with a sweet tooth, Britain has a rich chocolate history to experience. Here is a tasty selection of ways to get your fix on your visit.

A chunk of chocolate history

Chocolate is thought to have come to Britain from Europe in the 17th century and started being sold in London's elite chocolate houses first as a luxury drink.

Rabot 1745 in London's Borough Market is certainly keeping the tradition alive, serving cocoa cocktails which take inspiration from the decadence that surrounded chocolate consumption in that era with a range of adult treats to tickle the taste buds.

www.hotelchocolat.com/uk/restaurants/rabot-1745

The story may have begun in England's capital, but York, in north England, calls itself the home of chocolate. Boasting a 300-year history and several well-known brands – Terry's, Rowntree's and Cravens hail from the city – there are traces of its chocolate past almost everywhere to explore, from Rowntree Park to the ghost of Terry's chocolate shop and tea room on St Helen's Square, not to mention **York's Chocolate Story**. The guided tour is sure to give you an appetite for the goodies on offer at the chocolate café including a sharing chocolate fondue. www.yorkschocolatestory.com

Another city with a proud chocolatey past is Birmingham, central England. John Cadbury set up shop in the city and with the spoils his son created a village for the growing factory workers. Discover more about the origins of today's empire by enjoying a day at **Cadbury World**. www.cadburyworld.co.uk



You'll be surprised by how delicious chocolate tastes in a taco at Cocoa Ooze



Cocoa cocktails; a must-order for chocoholics!!

From the distant past to the here and now: the innovative use of chocolate in cookery is causing a stir in Aberdeen, north-east Scotland. Luxury bistro, **Cocoa Ooze**, brainchild of chocolatier Jamie Hutcheon, opened in March 2016 - the first of its kind in Scotland. Try the deliciously different puy lentil and chilli and chocolate taco or burger with cocoa relish before moving on to the desserts!

www.cocoa-ooze.co.uk

Master the art of chocolate-making

Try your hand at becoming a master chocolatier at **Cocoa Black** in Peebles, just outside Edinburgh, and get a lesson from a chocolatier trained by UK World Chocolate Master, Ruth Hinks. Choose from a bar, truffle or caramel-making class. www.cocoablack.com

Or, if you prefer to leave the art of chocolate making to the professionals, why not indulge in a chocolate afternoon tea at the **Secret Garden Café** in Kent, south-east England. www.secretgardenkent.co.uk

When the taste of chocolate is not enough

After a hard day's chocolate-making there can be no better place for a chocolate lover to rest their head than in a chocolate-themed hotel.

The Chocolate Boutique Hotel Bournemouth, on England's south coast, offers a range of rooms from the Maya and the Montezuma to the Aztec and Mocha, all decorated in warm hues of chocolate, cream and caramel. www.thechocolateboutiquehotel.co.uk

The 'Pudding Club' bedrooms at **Three Ways House Hotel** in the Cotswolds feature a Chocolate Suite. Indulgence extends to organic chocolate shampoo, bath foam and delicious Fairtrade Divine Chocolate treats in the room. www.puddingclub.com

Chocoholics should book in at the **Wensleydale Heifer** in Yorkshire, north England, based in the beautiful Yorkshire Dales National Park; this traditional coaching inn offers a stay in an award-winning luxury room enticingly named 'Chocolate Heaven'. www.wensleydaleheifer.co.uk

Or what could be more fun than a journey of discovery in a travel-inspired Chocolate Room at **Alton Towers** theme park. Decked out like a traditional railway cabin, complete with sound effects and, of course, an endless supply of hidden chocolates. Remember to check under the pillow before bed time!

www.altontowers.com/places-to-stay/themed-rooms/chocolate-room



The decadent and delicious Chocolate Room at Alton Towers

Tasty take-home treats

For handmade chocolate treats from Northern Ireland, go to **Co Couture** in Belfast. Made in small batches using only the finest raw ingredients, its Irish Whisky Truffle was awarded three gold stars by the Guild of Fine Food's Great Taste Awards and the dark chocolate with biscuit and cranberry also received two gold stars. www.cocouture.co.uk

Or for a deliciously different memento, visit the **Wickedly Welsh Chocolate Company's** Chocolate Deli in Pembrokeshire, two hours' drive from Cardiff in Wales, to take home a slice or two of chocolate presented in the style of patés and cheeses. www.wickedlywelsh.co.uk/about-us/chocolate-deli

Excellent organic restaurants

Organic food is healthy, ethical and flavoursome – so why wouldn't you want to eat it? Here are the ten of the best British restaurants for fans of all things organic.

Less restaurant, more café, **Kitch** is found in Canterbury, south-east England – 50 minutes by train from London's Kings Cross St Pancras. It dishes up some of the most innovative organic dishes around. Brunch is the best time to come: along with a traditional 'Full English' (eggs, bacon, beans, sausages, tomato, fried bread), you can feast on a kale and sundried tomato scramble, or some pesto-stuffed aubergine rolls. Before beginning the five-minute walk to Canterbury Cathedral, consider booking onto one of its wholefood cookery classes so you can replicate the dishes at home. www.kitchcafe.co.uk

Fancy some art with your organic food? **The Egg Café** is a refectory-like restaurant and independent gallery rolled into one. Located in the middle of Liverpool, north-west England, its airy loft space crowns an old, listed Victorian warehouse and provides grand views. Together with the photography and paintings, there are vegetarian dishes such as tandoori mushrooms and leek and cream cheese quiches. The Egg is open daily until 10.30pm, and attracts a trendy, boho crowd. www.eggcafe.co.uk

Aberystwyth is a characterful market town halfway down the west Wales coast, recently seen on TV screens during the brooding crime series *Hinterland*. As well as DCI Mathias and team, 'Aber' is home to **Treehouse**, an organic food store and restaurant. The shop sells more than a thousand products, most sourced locally, while breakfasts, lunches and afternoon teas are available upstairs using the same fodder. Their 'no compromise' approach to sustainable food has led to wholly Welsh ingredients (save herbs and spices) being used for one of each day's specials. www.treehousewales.co.uk



Shop organic at Treehouse

UNESCO-protected, Edinburgh's Calton Hill is home to the Scottish Government, Holyrood Palace and the Robert Burns Monument. It also boasts **The Gardener's Cottage**. Occupying a historic building at the mount's foot, this acclaimed all-organic French-style restaurant offers à la carte lunches and five-course evening menus, which change daily for just £25. All meals are served at long communal tables. The produce is Scottish and seasonal, with much of it homegrown or homemade (bread, chutney, cheese). The real signature, however, is a cost-efficient, waste-avoiding thriftiness – hence, for example, its poaching hake in whey left over from ricotta production. www.thegardenerscottage.co



Fab for families – River Cottage Canteen Bristol

Ideal for families, **River Cottage Canteen Bristol** offers a dedicated children's menu, along with the option to eat half-portions of most main menu items for older kids. During the evenings there are comedy nights and live music. One of four River Cottage canteens around south-west England, the restaurant is uniquely situated inside a listed 19th-century church within leafy western suburb Clifton. All food is

sourced from surrounding areas: the menu depends on what's available, but might include saddleback pork, creamed parsnip, peppered apples, crispy skin and Scrumpy cider sauce. www.rivercottage.net/canteens/bristol

Britain's first organic-certified pub, **The Duke of Cambridge** has recently teamed up with family-run Devonshire organic farm Riverford in more ways than one. First, the north London establishment's owner, Geetie Singh, married Riverford honcho Guy Watson in 2014. Following that, the two brands now collude on The Duke's lunch and dinner menus, which change each day and use only items with "impeccable provenance". The influences are British, Italian and North African, which means pub classics like bangers and mash (given a natural twist) alongside exotic options such as roasted hake fillet, red-pepper coulis and stuffed aubergine. <http://dukeorganic.co.uk>

Joint overall winner at the Sustainable Restaurant of the Year Awards 2015, **Captain's Galley** is also Britain's most northerly seafood restaurant. Which makes it seriously far-flung: found just outside the town of Scrabster in north-east Scotland; nearby Thurso a three hour 30 minute train ride from Inverness airport. Still, with managing husband-and-wife team Jim and Mary Cowie insisting on a philosophy of 'simplicity, integrity, seasonality and sustainability', it amply rewards all pilgrimages. The pair solely serve just-caught, non-pressurised fish, plus other products sourced from within a 50-mile radius – much of it foraged by Jim and Mary themselves. Romantically candlelit and accompanied by excellent wines, dinner here is a truly one-off experience. www.captainsgalley.co.uk

Originally a three-month pop-up, Belfast's **Home** has now relocated to permanent digs on Wellington Place, near to regal City Hall in Northern Ireland's capital. The cosy, informal vibe remains, however; think high ceilings, handwritten chalkboard menus and dark wooden floors. Upcycled furniture and works by local artists are available to purchase, but most guests are far too busy feasting mussel linguine or whipped goat's cheese with candied walnuts to notice. High-quality and – in the main – locally-sourced, the menu ranges from super-healthy concoctions using grains, pulses and omega-packed rapeseed oil to burgers and steaks. www.homebelfast.co.uk

Not content with being one of the country's best beaches, Blackpool Sands is also home to some of Britain's best seaside eats. Open nightly during July and August, and ideal for some post-swim sustenance, **Venus Café** serves fish pie made with locally-caught pollock and burgers using Devon's grass-fed beef. Just as thrilling are the views, stretching gloriously over the golden, Mediterranean-like cove. Located in south-west England, Blackpool Sands is 30 miles (48km) south of Exeter and its airport. www.lovingthebeach.co.uk/food.html



As fresh as can be – fish served at the Venus Café

Deep in the Yorkshire Dales, rolling hills and stone-built villages in northern England, hides **The Traddock**, a Georgian country-house hotel. Along with access to wonderful walking, visitors come for the double AA Rosette-winning restaurant, whose chefs do their utmost to use artisan, organic and local produce for their hearty dishes. Devour the slow-cooked Yorkshire rose veal with Madeira cream sauce, and then a rhubarb soufflé for pudding. 40

miles (65km) south-east is Leeds, just over two hours by train from London Kings Cross.
www.thetraddock.co.uk

Fantastic ‘free-from’ food

As anyone with a food allergy knows, eating out can be something of a risky business. Until recently, few restaurants and cafés understood the risks of cross-contamination, and gluten-free and dairy-free options could be hard to find. But things are changing, and many places – from traditional pubs to tearooms to hotel dining rooms – now offer ‘free from’ menus, which mean a real choice for those with allergies or intolerances.

Restaurants

Many of Britain’s best-known ‘chain’ restaurants cater for those with food-intolerances. Pizza restaurant chain, **Zizzi**, has expanded its already well-established allergen offering with a new 100% vegan and organic mozzarella alternative, Mozzarisella, allowing anyone who is dairy-free or vegan to enjoy great pizza (www.zizzi.co.uk). **Côte Brasserie** is also an excellent choice for gluten-free dining. Frites are cooked in a separate fryer to foods containing gluten so there’s no concern about cross-contamination and there is also a gluten-free breakfast menu, which includes toast (www.cote-restaurants.co.uk/cote).

Niche is London’s first Coeliac UK accredited 100% gluten-free restaurant. Open during the day for brunch, (think eggs benedict on gluten-free bread) or coffee and cake, they also cater for vegetarians and vegans and offer dinner and pre-theatre menus – it’s very close to Sadler Wells theatre



Andina is one of London’s most colourful restaurants – and offers enticing gluten-free food

(www.nichefoodanddrink.com). Peruvian cuisine is great for coeliacs – it’s light on wheat and full of delicious, vibrant flavours, which makes **Andina** heaven. Gluten-free foodies can choose from a dedicated special allergen menu; start with the quinoa croquettes, then move onto the ceviche Andina with seabass, avocado and blueberries. Don’t leave without trying the chocolate quinoa brownie and a Chilli Pisco Sour with their special home-infused Pisco (www.andinalondon.com). For pizza lovers,

Stingray Cafe is an authentic Italian without wheat with an affordable menu that’s fresh with lots of great toppings. They also do a wide range of gluten-free pasta, gluten-free garlic and cheese bread (www.stingraycafe.co.uk).

Elsewhere in Britain, coeliac sufferer Victoria Hall left her job in teaching to set up her own 100 per cent gluten-free restaurant in the heart of Leeds, north England, **Oxford Place**. Dishes include daytime fare such as brunch classic eggs benedict, sandwiches, salads and quiche to more substantial dinner options from bangers and mash to fish and hand cut chips (www.2oxfordplace.com). It’s not just classic British cuisine that has been given the ‘free-from’ treatment; Spanish tapas restaurant **Café Andaluz** serves tapas, paellas and a huge range of Spanish wines and cocktails with everything clearly marked with allergen

information. Find their bustling and relaxed restaurants in both Glasgow and Edinburgh (www.cafeandaluz.com). In Northern Ireland's capital, Belfast, food at **Home** is all fresh, local and seasonal with dedicated vegan, gluten-free and even skinny gluten-free menus on which the Vietnamese Duck, Rice Noodle, Mango, Avocado & Chilli Salad is feel good food at its best (www.homebelfast.co.uk).

Gastropubs

The new breed of gastropubs – traditional British inns with a focus on local produce and home cooking – are perfect for lazing on a Sunday with newspapers, a Bloody Mary and of course a traditional roast dinner.



Enjoy a cosy, gluten-free beer and roast at The Royal Oak

But any coeliac knows that there is a world of difference between catering for an allergy with a roast with no gravy, and coming up with a delicious dish that meets multiple needs without compromise on flavour. **The Royal Oak** in Marlow (located in Buckinghamshire, south-east England, reachable by train from London by road or rail in less than two hours) hits the nail on the head with its approachable staff, gluten-free beers and gluten and dairy-free menus that mean everyone can leave with their appetites satiated

(www.royaloakmarlow.co.uk). In west London, **The Truscott Arms** is a coeliac-friendly gastropub that mixes exceptional traditional pub food with a modern airy and laid-back atmosphere. From fish and chips and Sunday lunch to a great choice of gluten-free beer, it's an upmarket spot to enjoy gluten-free food without any worries

(www.thetruscottarms.com). In north-east England, **As You Like It** in Newcastle's suburbs (around three hours by train from London) is a quirky neighbourhood pub with seriously good food and a menu dedicated to gluten-free diners (www.asyoulikeitiesmond.com).

Cafes & coffee shops

In Britain, no one has to compromise on a sweet treat for lack of free-from options.

Patisserie Valerie has a new range of handmade gluten-free cakes and individual treats, which are available to purchase in stores around Britain. Belgian Chocolate Brownie, Marble Cake, Flapjack, Chocolate Chip Muffin and Ginger Biscuit are all gluten free.

(www.patisserie-valerie.co.uk).

Britain is also home to independent tea-shops brimming with delicious 'free-from' baked goods. Housed in an old chicken shed, **The Bee Shack** in Dorset (on the south-west coast of England, near to Bath and Bristol), is a homespun and cosy space with views over the Dorset countryside. The completely gluten-free and vegetarian menu includes savoury tarts, English puddings and cream teas (www.honeybuns.co.uk). In south-east England, only an hour on the train from London, **The Creperie** in Brighton has become a local hotspot for all things crêpe. Their savoury selection of wraps, known as galettes, are made from gluten-free buckwheat (www.thecreperiebrighton.com). **Martha's** in Glasgow is all about healthy and hearty fast food. Choose from a range from meats served in a box with rice and homemade 'slaw for lunch (www.mymarthas.co.uk). And pretty Cardiff Bay in Wales is home to **The**

Pure Kitchen, which serves up clean paleo food including paleo steak and eggs or a super-healthy muscle-builder salad (www.cafepure.co.uk). Over in Cardigan, west Wales, **Deli Delights** is bright and cheerful lunch spot with sumptuous gluten free options in the cake cabinet and bread options for lunch. www.delidelightswales.co.uk

Hotel breakfasts

Looking for a 'free-from' breakfast when staying in a hotel or bed and breakfast? In Wales' beautiful Pembrokeshire countryside, **Clynderwen Farm B&B** is a historic longhouse surrounded by its own fields. Owner Carol can arrange special gluten-free afternoon teas and breakfasts for guests so they feel right at home (www.pembrokeshirefarmbandb.co.uk). **Percy's Country Hotel and Restaurant** in Devon (on the south-west coast of England) takes 'free-from' to another level. Accommodating dairy, wheat and gluten-free, even the biscuits on arrival in the rooms are all made without dairy, wheat or gluten. In the restaurant, breakfast is offered with home-made gluten-free bread, home-made gluten-free pork sausages, home-cured bacon and eggs laid not too far from the kitchen door (www.percys.co.uk).



Tuck into a delicious dairy and gluten free brekkie at Percy's

For more information on gluten-free places to eat and stay in Britain visit www.go-gluten-free-wheat-free.co.uk

Food from around the world

Take your taste buds on a world tour as you explore dishes, foods and flavours from around the globe, right here in Britain.

London



Wahaca offers up mouth-watering Mexican across Britain

The culinary capital of the planet, London is bubbling with the aromas, textures and delicious flavours of world foods. From the spicy Mexican street food of the excellent **Wahaca** chain, to the Modern European dishes of Piccadilly's **The Wolseley** restaurant – inspired by the grand cafés of 19th-century Vienna – you can eat your way around the globe in one city. Among the capital's most popular dishes, you'll find Japanese sushi, American hamburgers, Belgian's mussels, Turkish kebabs, Italian pizzas, Moroccan hummus and tasty Thai curries. www.wahaca.co.uk,

www.thewolseley.com

What makes London so exciting is its cultural diversity and arguably two of the most fascinating districts are Chinatown in Soho and Banglatown in the East End. **Banglatown** is named after its burgeoning Bangladeshi community and centres on Brick Lane, close to the stations of Aldgate East and Shoreditch High Street. Brick Lane is famous for its fantastic south Asian curry houses, as well as Jewish bagel shops and markets selling food, fashion and vintage goods. While you're there, stop for a cheap lunch at the **Old Boiler House** food hall with stalls selling cuisines such as Malaysian, Italian, Ethiopia and Japanese.

www.visitbricklane.org, www.boilerhouse-foodhall.co.uk

Chinatown has been bustling with Chinese, Taiwanese, Cantonese, Sichuanese, Malaysian, Japanese, Korean, Thai and Indonesian restaurants in its Soho location since the 1950s, although London's east Asian community has roots that stretch back to the 18th century. For a flavour of Asia, head for the 80 restaurants that centre on Gerrard Street and its huge Chinese gates. www.chinatownlondon.org



Chinatown's magnificent archway – the gateway to delicious dining

Wales

In tandem with its own delicious native cuisine, Wales is awash with award-winning cuisine from all around the planet. Enjoy authentic French food courtesy of newcomer **Chez Francis** in Cardiff, south Wales. The city also boasts **Chai Street**, the new Indian street food from the team behind the multi award-winning Mint & Mustard restaurant. Dine on Spanish artisan food and wine at branches of **Ultracomida** in the towns of Aberystwyth in Ceredigion, west Wales and Narberth in Pembrokeshire, south west Wales. Alternatively, savour sensational Thai flavours at **The**

Coconut Kitchen in the coastal town of Abersoch, Gwynedd, south Wales. www.ultracomida.co.uk, www.chez-francis.co.uk, chaistreet.com, www.thecoconutkitchen.co.uk

Northern Ireland

Steeped in Irish food traditions, Northern Ireland has also embraced cuisines from abroad. **Coppi** is cosmopolitan Belfast's first 'bacari' – inspired by the wine bars of Venice and serving Italian finger foods such as feta fritters. Elsewhere in the city, Michelin-starred chef Danni Barry's travels inspired her to import the flavours of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand to Michael Deane's restaurant **EIPI**. To the north, you'll find award-winning Indian cuisine at the **Taaj Restaurant** in Londonderry, the second-largest city in Northern Ireland. Meanwhile, for a real taste of the Emerald Isle, try **Ardtara** in its Upperlands region, an hour's drive north-west of Belfast. The Irish Restaurant Association named it 'Best Emerging Cuisine 2015' for its use of foraged and home-grown ingredients. www.coppi.co.uk, www.michaeldeane.co.uk/eipic, www.ardtara.com, www.taajrestaurant.com

Scotland

Vying with London and Bradford (north England) for the title of Britain's 'Curry Capital', Glasgow is famed for its Indian cuisine. Whether you want traditional Indian dishes from long-established restaurants like **Shish Mahal** or fashionable Bombay street food from newcomer **Babu**, there's something for every taste. The nation has plenty more to offer though, from the French-Scottish fusion of **Greywalls – Chez Roux** in both Edinburgh and nearby Muirfield, to the hearty noodle soups of Glasgow's only Vietnamese restaurant, **The Hanoi Bike Shop**. www.babu-kitchen.com, greywalls.co.uk, www.hanoibikeshop.co.uk

Cornwall

Situated at the south-western tip of England, the Cornish have a great food tradition that's given the world clotted cream and the Cornish pasty. Jutting into the Atlantic Ocean, it's fresh fish and seafood that predominate and there's a wealth of world cooking styles with



Pan-Asian, New Zealand-influenced, Cornwall-based: Kota

which to enjoy it. Acclaimed restaurants **Kota** and **Kota Kai** in Porthleven, west Cornwall serves pan-Asian cuisine influenced by chef and owner Jude Kereama's native New Zealand; 'kota' is Maori for shellfish. In Watergate Bay, north Cornwall there's an Italian-inspired menu courtesy of a Cornish branch of Jamie Oliver's award-winning **Fifteen** chain. Meanwhile, south Cornwall could be confused for the French Riviera with bistro style menu of **The Old Quay House**, newly headed by chef Ryan Kellow who describes his style as "classical French with a modern twist." www.kotarestaurant.co.uk,

www.kotakai.co.uk, www.fifteencornwall.co.uk, www.theoldquayhouse.com

9 of the best curry houses in Britain

1. Gymkhana, London

Michelin-starred classic and contemporary Indian cuisine in a gorgeous setting inspired by old Colonial Indian gentlemen's sports clubs. gymkhanalondon.com

2. Mint & Mustard, Cardiff, south Wales

Modern Indian cuisine inspired by the Kerala philosophy of fresh, light and healthy food. It's been recommended by the *Good Food Guide*. www.mintandmustard.com

3. Valley Junction 397, Newcastle, north-east England

Contemporary dishes from Bangladesh and beyond served in a converted Edwardian railway carriage at a disused station. Named the 'best in the north-east' by the *Good Curry Guide* and "most original Indian restaurant" by The Curry Club of Great Britain.

www.valleyrestaurants.co.uk

4. Nu Delhi Lounge, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Belfast's best Indian according to TripAdvisor reviewers. This 100-seat city centre restaurant and cocktail lounge serves contemporary and classic dishes, and has scored glowing reviews. www.nu-delhilounge.com

5. Shish Mahal, Glasgow, Scotland

The city's oldest curry house is a multi-award winner, serving pan-Indian dishes. Claiming to be the birthplace of Britain's favourite curry – the chicken tikka masala – it was heralded "the best place on earth" to eat the dish by *Lonely Planet*. www.shishmahal.co.uk

6. Pushkar, Birmingham, central England

This British Curry Awards winner fuses contemporary and traditional Punjabi and north Indian flavours and scooped 2015's 'Best Midlands Restaurant' category. It's situated in Birmingham city centre, just 90 minutes from London by train. <http://pushkardining.com>

7. Dishroom, London

Inspired by the old Iranian cafés of Bombay, this small chain has won awards for both its concept, classy interiors and Persian-Indian food, including 'Best Casual Dining' at the 2014 British Curry Awards. www.dishroom.com

8. The Cinnamon Club, London

Innovative, contemporary Indian dishes served in a book-lined Victorian library. Celebrating its 15th anniversary this year, the multi-award winner has scooped accolades including 'Best London Restaurant' at the 2015 British Curry Awards. www.cinnamonclub.com

9. Karma Restaurant, Whitburn, Scotland

The multi-award winning restaurant specialises in regional Indian dishes and is a previous winner of the British Curry Awards' 'Best In Scotland' category. It's situated in a small town about 40 minutes' drive from Glasgow and Edinburgh. www.karmawhitburn.co.uk

Halal Restaurants

From lively Mexican cantinas to tasty kebab shops, here's a pick of some of the best Halal restaurants in Britain.

Currently boasting ten British outlets, **Tinseltown** is part of Britain's gourmet burger boom. One of those joints is in Birmingham, in central England, at its family entertainment complex Star City. The all-Halal menu includes The Don, a 5oz behemoth that comes with cheese and homemade 'Halal Beef Bacon'. Shakes, sandwiches and grills are also on offer, as are kids' menus. www.tinseltown.co.uk

Among **Steakout's** eight premium 'meathouses' is a diner in central Leicester, central England. Found on busy Granby Street, the grill marinates its meats for days and serves options like Philly cheese steaks under caramelised onions. Mixed grills for sharing are most popular, with side choices like fried tilapia fish and cheese balls not far behind. <http://steakoutuk.com>

For something much humbler, eat at the all-day **Islamic Cultural Centre's Restaurant** in Belfast. It's simply decorated, but far from simple-minded: hence why this self-service venue has earned rave reviews from local press. Expect Arabic and Pakistani cuisine with rice, pasta, samosas and kebabs, plus specials like roast dinners and stuffed chickens. There's also an extensive salad bar, Arab pastries and mint teas. Non-Muslims are welcome. <http://islamireland.ie/facilities-services/restaurant>

From Northern Ireland's capital to that of Wales, and a location near the Principality Stadium. Designed to mirror the experience of market eating in Penang or Kuala Lumpur, **Wok-ker Shaker** ranks among Britain's most authentic Malaysian restaurants. The specialty of its all-Halal menu is Nasi Lemak – coconut rice, anchovy, eggs and chunks of slow-cooked chicken 'rendang' – with baked fish and Singaporean stir-fried rice strips also featuring. Prices are extremely reasonable at £3.95 or £4.95 per main dish. www.facebook.com/Wok-ker-Shaker-570139003102173

Mexican food and Halal products are rarely found in cahoots, but **Amigos Mexican Kitchen** in Sheffield, central England, offers taco trays, chili con carne, quesadillas and burritos using Halal meat. The airy, attractive venue is a large, split-level space with tiled floors, just south of the city centre. www.amigosmexicankitchen.co.uk



Halal and tasty – Amigos Mexican Kitchen in Sheffield

A cult option among Edinburgh's students and in-the-know foodies, **Kebab Mahal** majors in Halal food, huge platefuls, low prices and a convivial atmosphere. Both a takeaway and sit-in restaurant, its Middle Eastern-style lamb and chicken dishes come for around £5 – leaving plenty of change for an accompanying glass of mango lassi. Just outside is Edinburgh's attractive Old Town, with the impressive National Museum a few streets away. www.kebab-mahal.co.uk

Britain's south-coast maritime cities of Bournemouth, Southampton and Portsmouth boast a combined five outposts of street-food chicken chain **Roosters Piri Piri**, which has 34 in total across Britain. Solely using high-quality Halal meat, it offers a range of global dishes, with the main focus on – as the name suggests – piri-piri chicken. The Portsmouth incarnation is located in the city centre, within a stroll of the seafront and oceanarium.

www.roosterspiripiri.com

Manchester's 'Italian Quarter' is home to a clump of restaurants from southern European countries, including the fine-dining **Avalanche**. The pizzas, pastas, risottos, lamb shanks and meatballs are all Halal-guaranteed, while there's also a broad range of seafood dishes.

<http://avalancherestaurant.co.uk>

How about some Halal sushi? Just off London's Edgware Road and its many shisha cafes, **Kurobuta**'s Marble Arch branch is 'junk food' gone gourmet: tea-smoked lamb chops, wagyu sliders and tuna-sashimi pizzas. You'll need to ring three days in advance so they can order the Halal meat, but it'll be well worth it. www.kurobuta-london.com

One of Wales' finest curry houses, award-winning **Asha Balti House** is located in Llanrwst (pronounced 'tlan-roost'), a small, pretty town on the River Conwy close to Snowdonia. The Bangladeshi restaurant prepares Chicken Achari, cooked with spices, mango and fresh cream, or Chicken Shatkora – using a Bengali citrus fruit – for Halal eaters in an open-plan kitchen. Only the locally-sourced lamb is exempt. www.asha-balti-house.co.uk

Halal dining in Britain doesn't get swankier than **Vermillion**, in Manchester, a low-lit three-storey restaurant. Near to Manchester City's equally-glittering Etihad Stadium, the restaurant cost £5m and is known as much for opulent interiors as its Thai-Indian fusion food. The latter spills onto an à la carte menu offering traditional dishes such as Karahi lamb and sea bass wrapped in banana leaf. <https://vermilion.uk.com>

12 sustainable restaurants

These days it's not just about *what* we're eating, but the *who* (who's the producer?), the *where* (where has it come from?) and the *how* (how was it farmed? Fished?) A growing number of restaurants in Britain are answering these questions by developing relationships with local suppliers and artisan producers, adhering to sustainable fishing policies and implementing ethical policies for everything from waste disposal to employment practices. For a dinner that leaves you with a clear conscience as well as a full stomach, here are 12 great restaurants to try.

1. Star Bistro at Ullenwood, Cotswolds, south-west England

The Star Bistro is part of the campus at Ullenwood, which is dedicated to offering opportunities to disabled young people. The restaurant combines sustainable sourcing policies with offering young people with learning and physical disabilities the chance to experience working in a busy kitchen environment. This is Modern British fine dining, and what the kitchen doesn't use goes to those living in poverty in the area. All profits go to the No Child Hungry Gloucestershire campaign. Ullenwood is around two hours' drive from London. www.nationalstar.org

2. The Captain's Galley, Scrabster, Scotland

The most northerly seafood restaurant in Britain, the Captain's Galley is the creation of Jim and Mary Cowie, who dreamt of restoring the town of Scrabster's old 'Salmon Bothy and Ice House' into a sustainable restaurant. They've done exactly that, serving 100% wild, sustainable seafood and salmon, bought at the town's fish market each morning. Dining on the freshest oysters, scallops and crab beneath the historic stone arches makes for a truly unforgettable meal. Scrabster is five hours' drive north of Edinburgh.

www.captainsgalley.co.uk

3. Daylesford Organic, Gloucestershire, south-west England



Sustainably sourced and fresh-farmed produce is served at Daylesford Organic

Thirty-five years ago the Bamford family decided to turn their farms into sustainable, organic businesses, and in 2016 they have restaurants in London and Gloucester, supply food to Selfridges and have one of the best sustainable food emporiums in the whole of Britain. The shop is in Kingham, in the heart of the Cotswolds, alongside the cafe and pizza bar, both serving food made with ingredients from the on-site creamery, market garden, butcher and baker. Kingham is around two hours' drive from London.

<http://daylesford.com>

4. The Gallery, Barry, south Wales

Twice winner of Welsh Sustainable Restaurant of the year, The Gallery is a bright, airy dining room in the pretty seaside town of Barry, serving up fish from the boats that sail from the harbour each morning, and meats, cheeses and vegetables from local farms.

Sustainability extends to what you drink too; all of the beers are sourced in Wales and most of the wine is organic or biodynamic. Barry is just under three hours by train from London Paddington. <http://the-gallery-restaurant.co.uk>

5. Made in Belfast, Belfast, Northern Ireland

There are three branches of Made in Belfast dotted around the city, meaning you're never far from truly sustainable eating. Don't come expecting white linen and matching furniture; there's a hipster feel here, with lots of shabby chic styling. All food is carefully sourced, particularly fish; the restaurant never uses endangered species, or fish in its breeding season. There's an excellent value pre-theatre menu available from 4-6pm (£15 for two courses). <http://madeinbelfastni.com>

6. The Pig, Brockenhurst, Hampshire, south-east England

Although The Pig is actually a small hotel, located in the picturesque village of Brockenhurst, in the lushly beautiful New Forest, it's possible just to book a table for lunch or dinner in the delightful conservatory-style dining room. This is a restaurant that really does begin in the garden; each morning the chefs find whatever is ripe or ready for picking, and fashion the menu around it, alongside meat and vegetables from surrounding farms, and fish from the nearby coast. Brockenhurst is 90 minutes by train from London Waterloo.

www.thepighotel.com

7. The Gallivant, east Sussex, south-east England

An idyllic beachside getaway, the Gallivant sits just across the road from the rolling dunes of Camber Sands beach, and has strong links with the local fishing community who supply the fresh fish and seafood each day. Ninety five per cent of the Gallivant's menu is sourced from within ten miles of the restaurant and the abundance of local vegetables means it's an excellent choice for vegetarians. The dining room has a chic, Scandinavian feel that makes the most of its beachfront location. Camber is around two hours' drive from London.

<http://thegallivant.co.uk>



Colourful and flavourful – a dish at The Gallivant

8. Foxlow, London

The lesser-known sibling of London's famous Hawksmoor restaurants, Foxlow offers a more relaxed style of dining, with the focus still firmly on carefully sourced ingredients from local, sustainable suppliers. Steaks are what many people come for, sourced from the award-winning Ginger Pig native-breed cattle farm in North Yorkshire, but there are plenty of fish dishes too. An excellent choice for a family meal, there are branches in London's Stoke Newington, Clerkenwell, Chiswick and Balham. www.foxlow.co.uk

9. The Eagle & Child, Manchester, north-west England

A derelict pub until 2011, the Eagle was re-born under the ownership of Glen Duckett, who wanted to create a place that served sustainable food, along with giving apprenticeships and opportunities to unemployed 16-25-year-olds. The accent is on local produce; Lancashire cheeses and poultry, fish from the nearby port of Fleetwood. Many of the vegetables and

herbs come from the Edible Beer Garden, which is also a delightful place to dine on a warm summer's day. Manchester is around two hours by train from London Euston. <http://eagle-and-child.com>

10. Lussmans Fish and Grill, St Albans, Hertfordshire, south England

The first fish restaurant to get MSC certification outside London (meaning that all fish and seafood is sourced from well-managed fisheries), Lussmans - on the picturesque Cathedral Walk in St Albans - also focuses on sourcing unique foods from around Britain. Tregothnan tea from Cornwall, Sussex Saddleback pork, British Label Red Anglais chicken and British craft beers and cider all appear on the menu, and vegetarians are particularly well catered for. There are 100% recyclable, biodegradable doggy boxes so you can take leftovers home. St Albans is 20 minutes by train from London St Pancras. www.lussmanns.com

11. Edinburgh Larder Bistro, Edinburgh, Scotland

The key to the Larder Bistro's success is its close relationships with local artisan producers and suppliers; regular visits mean there are often new recipes and ingredients springing up on the menu, which changes on a monthly basis. Go along on a Friday, for steak and craft beer night; each week a different organic animal is featured, with nose to tail dishes on offer. Foraging is central to the restaurants' list of ingredients, and diners can book foraging courses to learn more about Scotland's wild larder. www.edinburghlarder.co.uk

12. The Belfry, Honiton, Devon, south-west England

Steeped in history, the Belfry is a 19th-century former schoolhouse, near to the market town of Honiton in Devon. It has such a strict no-waste policy, that guests need to order from the menu 24 hours in advance. Succulent smoked fish comes from the nearby Dartmouth Smokehouse, while meat comes from Barleymow's farm shop, just three miles up the road. Everything - from sauces and stocks to ice-cream and sorbets - is made from scratch in-house and, on warm evenings, dinner can be taken on the terrace, which has wonderful views across the surrounding valley. Honiton is around three hours' drive from London. <http://thebelfrycountryhotel.com>

Family-friendly restaurants

Finding family friendly places to eat in Britain is easy! There's a wealth of great chain restaurant options, from Giraffe and Pizza Express to Wagamama and Frankie and Benny's, which all offer menus suitable for little people and facilities, activities and atmosphere to ensure that everyone will enjoy their dining experience.

If you're looking for something a little special, out of the ordinary or especially child-focused, here are ten places worth trying at every time of day.

Activities to build up an appetite on site

Combine an energetic way to spend a couple of hours with fun finger food. **All Star Lanes** in Manchester, north-west England, will bowl you over. With a distinctive US diner style, you can get a kids game of bowling, a main, side, dessert or shake and a soft drink for £15.

www.allstarlanes.co.uk/locations/manchester



Eat, drink and bowl at All Star Lanes!

For the cat-loving families out there, the **Kitty Café** in Nottingham, central England, a two-hour drive from Manchester, is the perfect place to visit. This feline sanctuary is available to book into for an hour at a time. The café offers a wide range of teas and coffees as well as tasty sweet treats too. Just don't leave them unattended! www.kittycafe.co.uk

High and tech lunches

In the heart of London's West End, there's one place to go where you're in control of when you place your order more than any other. At **inamo Soho** the unique interactive tablecloth ordering system is a fun way to get children to really take an interest in the food they choose. The Asian fusion menu takes influences from Japanese, Thai and Chinese cooking so there should be something for everyone to enjoy. And if it's a special occasion, you can even get your tablecloth customised. www.inamo-restaurant.com

For lunch with a view there's no house better than a treehouse. A 45-minute drive from Newcastle, north-east England, is Alnwick Garden. High above the ground, nestled in mature lime trees is the **Treehouse Restaurant**. Accessed by wobbly rope bridges and wooden walkways, this is a beautiful place to eat for children of all ages.

www.alnwickgarden.com/explore/whats-here/the-treehouse/about

Restaurants where kids take centre stage

At **Café Junior** in the Welsh capital, Cardiff, there's no mistaking who the restaurateurs are trying to impress. Especially for 0-5 year-olds, this award-winning café and bistro opens until 8.30pm for families to dine and play. With comfy sofas and toys available, it's a relaxing home from home environment. www.cafejunior.com

In the heart of Belfast's cathedral quarter in Northern Ireland is **Metropolitan Arts Centre**, better known as the MAC. Entertain the kids in the Family Room before stopping for food.

NATIVE by Yellow Door is the new eatery in town where the kids' menu is definitely not just an afterthought. The focus is on tasty high-quality, locally sourced ingredients to help kids on the road to a grown-up palate. www.themaclive.com/food-and-drink/MAC-food

Afternoon tea with a delicious twist

All aboard for an afternoon of tea and sightseeing on a vintage Routemaster bus. BB Bakery offer a whistle-stop 90-minute tour of central London while you tuck into a selection of sandwiches, scones, cupcakes and more.



Mmm....Charlie and the Chesterfield afternoon tea. Funny how the kids won't have any trouble finishing this particular meal!

www.bbbakery.co.uk/afternoon-tea/afternoon-tea-bus-tour

For true chocolate indulgence try the Charlie and the Chesterfield afternoon tea. At the **Chesterfield Hotel**, Mayfair, just a tube ride from the theatre *where Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* musical is currently playing, big kids can sample special blended chocolate tea while little ones can sip on hot chocolate with marshmallows and feast on the delights of the Oompa Loompa menu.

www.chesterfieldmayfair.com/afternoon-tea

Grown up tastes

A great place to introduce your children to Michelin-star quality food is Edinburgh's **Scran and Scallie** restaurant. While there are toys and a designated area for children, they are equally welcome to play at being all grown up trying traditional Scottish fayre in this charming rustic pub in the capital city. www.scranandscallie.com

And if you struggle to cater for a family with varied and exotic tastes then **ZaZa Bazaar** in Newcastle, north-east England, can help. It mixes the theatre of live cooking, the buzz of a night market and the simplicity of street food dining to produce a world food banquet restaurant. www.newcastle.zazabazaar.com

Fashionably late feasting

Are you a night owl? Or perhaps you prefer dining post-theatre rather than pre... Whatever your reason for nocturnal nibbling, there's a host of restaurants in Britain for those seeking a late night dining option. London is the hub for 24-hour hotspots but there are a plenty of after-dark gastro-gems outside of England's capital too. From the grab-and-go to the savour-it-slow, here's a selection of some of Britain's finest after-hours offerings.

Midnight munchies

Sit back and settle in for a speakeasy session at **Buffalo and Rye** in Birmingham, central England. Burgers, pit-smoked meats and gourmet hot dogs go down well with whiskey and cocktails until midnight (www.buffaloandrye.co.uk). Move on to the newest place in town for the sweetest of midnight treats. This New York-style loft café is the latest of a crop of pudding-only parlours to open in the Digbeth area of Birmingham. **Pirlo's Dessert Lounge**, serves decadent desserts until 1am on Fridays and Saturdays (www.facebook.com/Pirlos-Dessert-Lounge-1054832644556154).



Tuck into a dessert any time until 1am at Pirlo's

Enjoy the show at **Charlston Steakhouse**, open until late in the Welsh capital, Cardiff. This popular family-run restaurant has a theatre-style kitchen so you can check that your steak is being cooked just as you ordered it (www.charltonssteakhouse.co.uk).

The capital of Northern Ireland, Belfast is home to **AM:PM**. Well-known for its quirky atmosphere and for serving traditional French, Irish and European dishes in an unconventional way, it serves up food until 11pm but is open until 1am (www.ampbelfast.com).

What started out as an Italian food cart set up in Nairn, Inverness and Glasgow has evolved into **Civerinos**. Within Edinburgh's Royal Mile you'll find this modern Italian street food and pizza slice bar. Opened in 2015, it has become a firm favourite, serving 'slow fast food' daily until 1am (www.civerinos.com).



One of the most unique places to dine in Liverpool, Alma de Cuba is located in a former church

For a dining experience in spectacular surroundings, there are few more heavenly than **Alma de Cuba** in Liverpool, north-west England. This iconic destination in the former St Peter's Catholic Church is the first church in the city to be turned into a social venue. A working church until 1978, the building was refurbished and turned into an ultra-stylish restaurant and bar. The South American and Caribbean-influenced restaurant stops serving at 10pm, and shuts at midnight. But the bar is open until 2am at weekends. Just make sure you read the '10 Commandments

of the bar' before you step inside! www.alma-de-cuba.com

Three is the magic number

At **Novi** in Cambridge, accessible in 45 minutes by train from London, the kitchen closes at 9pm but the cocktail menu beckons until 3am, and you can enjoy one on each of the three floors! www.novicambridge.co.uk

The monthly-changing late night menu in **Napoleons Casino** in Leeds, an hour from Manchester, is served until 3.45am on Friday and Saturday nights. If you're feeling lucky, the bar and casino are open until 5am. www.napoleons-casinos.co.uk/leeds

Nestled in the Lanes area of Brighton on the south coast, an hour on the train from London, is **Bohemia**. Set on three levels you can order food until 9pm. Then make your way to the late lounge, take a seat at 'the barman's table' and discover the history of the gin, vodka and champagne you sample. www.bohemiabrighton.co.uk

From dusk til dawn

The last seating at **Tinseltown**, an American style diner in London's Farringdon, is 3.30am, closing at 4am Mondays to Saturdays. Try one of their trio 'challenge' burgers or pick from one of more than 30 indulgent shakes. www.tinseltown.co.uk

If you find yourself in Manchester city centre as the sun is rising, **Crazy Pedro's** pizza parlour is a must-visit venue. It began as a pop up, but has become a beloved fixture, serving pizza by the slice right up to 4am. www.crazypedros.co.uk

The city never sleeps

In the heart of London's Square Mile, two restaurants close to Liverpool Street station really mean business when it comes to making sure they can meet their customers' needs. If you're hungry, they're ready to serve you morning, noon and all through the night!

Polo Bar offers a modern twist on the great British café experience, try the 'make your own middle of the night breakfast' to award-winning pancakes stacks or the royal brunch for two served with tea and bubbles.

www.polo24hourbar.co.uk



Watch the sun come up at Duck and Waffle, a 24 hour eatery in central London

From the 40th floor of the Heron Tower, **Duck and Waffle**, won't leave you high and dry. From the restaurant's namesake dish to spicy ox cheek doughnuts and bacon wrapped dates, the highest restaurant in Britain delivers plates of food that are capable of distracting you from the amazing view across the capital – for a moment or two.

www.duckandwaffle.com

Famous foodie faces

Britain's chefs are some of the most recognisable foodie faces across the world, through their restaurant chains, cookbooks and TV appearances. Here we take a closer look at these great British cooks and reveal where in Britain you can sample their much talked-about cuisine.

Jason Atherton

Jason Atherton, who was once an apprentice with fellow famous British foodie Gordon Ramsey, is now a global success story in his own right with 16 restaurants across the world.

Pollen Street Social in Mayfair, London, is among his most famous eateries. This was his first restaurant to open in the capital and was awarded a coveted Michelin star within just six months of its 2011 launch.

www.jasonatherton.co.uk/restaurants



Jason Atherton, who recently launched a Japanese restaurant and cocktail bar

Among this Yorkshire-born chef's most recent restaurant launches is the Japanese izakaya-style **Sosharu**, which opened in central London in March 2016. Downstairs at the restaurant is a cocktail bar called **7 Tales**, which aims to recreate the nightlife of Tokyo.

www.sosharulondon.com

Jamie Oliver

Jamie Oliver's culinary career has rocketed since being given his first cookery TV show in 1999, after being spotted by a documentary crew while working as a sous chef at The River Café, London.

Worth an estimated £240m in 2014, visitors to Britain can eat at one of five of his restaurant brands. In central London this includes **Barbecoa**, which is ideal for meat lovers, British cuisine specialist **Union Jacks** and fast food eaterie **Jamie Oliver's Diner**.

(www.jamieoliver.com/restaurants). There are also 44 branches of **Jamie's Italian**, including restaurants in London, Aberdeen, Bristol, Leeds and Cardiff. www.jamieoliver.com/italian

Social enterprise is another key part of his career with unemployed young people offered apprenticeships through his **Fifteen** restaurants, located in central London, Cornwall and Amsterdam. In 2016 Jamie Oliver announced a major expansion to this apprenticeship programme with the aim of offering places to young people in all his restaurants Britain-wide.

www.fifteen.net

He is also frequently seen breaking bread with politicians as part of his campaigning on issues such as obesity and promoting healthy eating in schools. Such work has included the launch of Jamie Oliver's Kitchen Garden Project, which helps schools to grow their own food. In 2003 he was awarded an MBE from the Queen for his contribution to the cooking and hospitality industry.

Gordon Ramsey

With his TV shows, such as *Hell's Kitchen*, shown in more than 200 countries Gordon

Ramsey is arguably one of Britain's most famous foodie faces. He also continues to run a string of successful restaurants, both in Britain as well as globally.

His most famous British eateries include his first to open, **Restaurant Gordon Ramsey**. This is London's longest-running restaurant to hold three Michelin stars. His other notable London restaurants include **Union Street Café**, which has a menu that is changed daily and specialises in Mediterranean cuisine. Another is the Michelin starred **Pétrus**, which focuses on modern French cuisine. www.gordonramsayrestaurants.com

Tom Kitchin

At the age of 29, this Scottish cooking sensation became one of the youngest Michelin star recipients in the world for his first restaurant **The Kitchin**, which he runs with his wife Michaela in Leith, Edinburgh. www.thekitchin.com

Since then he has opened a second restaurant, **Castle Terrace**, near Edinburgh Castle along with chef Dominic Jack. www.castleterracerestaurant.com

He is also a familiar face on British television, appearing on *Masterchef*, *The Great British Menu* as well as *The Chef's Protégé*. In 2012 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Edinburgh Napier University for his contribution to Scottish food culture and he has two recipe books, from *Nature to Place*, which focuses on seasonal recipes, and the home-cooking dedicated *Kitchin Suppers*.



Tom Kitchin was one of the world's youngest Michelin star recipients

Heston Blumenthal



Not just a chef, but a fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry too! Heston Blumenthal

Some say he looks like a mad professor and he certainly favours a scientific approach to cooking, which has earned him three honorary university degrees and a fellowship from the Royal Society of Chemistry. Multi-sensory cooking is another special ingredient behind a successful career that shines bright with Michelin stars.

His first restaurant, **The Fat Duck**, in Bray, Berkshire, south England, boasted three Michelin stars before its temporary relocation to Australia; it has since reopened in Bray, although opened too late to be assessed for the 2015 Michelin list. The restaurant frequently graces the world's top restaurants lists. www.thefatduck.co.uk

Bray is also the location of two more of his eateries, **The Hinds Head**, a 15th-century pub that has also earned Blumenthal another Michelin star, and **The Crown**. www.hindsheadbray.com

www.thecrownatbray.com

Visitors to London can experience Blumenthal's culinary assault on the senses, with a historical twist, at the two Michelin-starred **Dinner** by Heston Blumenthal. Meals at this Hyde Park restaurant are inspired by British dining dating back to the 1800s.

www.dinnerbyheston.com

In addition, in 2014 he launched **The Perfectionists Café**, at The Queen's Terminal at Heathrow Airport for those visitors who want to sample his fine food as soon as their plane has landed. www.theperfectionistscafe.com

Ones to watch – chefs making their mark in Britain

It is not just renowned British chefs such as Gordon Ramsey and Heston Blumenthal that are grabbing the headlines for their culinary skills. There is also an array of emerging culinary talent, whose food can be savoured at locations across Britain.

Kevin Tickle – Forest Side, Grasmere, Lake District, north-west England

Kevin Tickle is fast becoming synonymous with quality cooking in the spectacular scenery of the Lake District, which is around three hours by train from London.

He earned his culinary stripes first as chief forager at the Michelin star rated **L'Enclume** then as head chef at **Rogan and Co**, both in Cartmel. He is now head chef at the **Forest Side Restaurant and Hotel** in Grasmere.

As a native of the area, he has an excellent knowledge of local herbs and produce, which form a staple part of his cooking. He also insists on using local suppliers for his ingredients, with the aim of offering visitors a genuine Lake District culinary experience. In addition, the grounds of the Forest Side hotel supply his kitchen with around 90 different fruits and vegetables and his foraging ethos continues with wild mushrooms being a key ingredient of many of his meals. www.theforestsides.com



Kevin Tickle uses fresh, wild ingredients at his highly praised Lake District restaurant

Scott Goss – The Twenty Six, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, south-east England

This Kent-born rising star of the British food scene launched his career working in the kitchen at Gary Rhodes' City Rhodes in London, where he picked up French cooking techniques in particular. True to his roots he moved away from the capital while in his early twenties, heading back to Kent, where he has emerged as one of the region's busiest and most respected chefs. He was made head chef, then executive chef at **The Swan in West Malling**, Kent, and is also head chef at **The Twenty Six**, the Tunbridge Wells-based restaurant that seats just 26 people. In addition, he is executive chef at **The Beacon**, also in Tunbridge Wells, under an hour by train from London.

Although Kent is known as the garden of England, it is his seafood dishes that Goss is most renowned, especially his smoked haddock meals. www.theswanwestmallings.co.uk, www.thetwenty-six.co.uk, <http://the-beacon.co.uk>

Emily Watkins – Kingham Plough, Oxfordshire, south-central England

In 2007, while aged just 28, Emily Watkins, who learnt her trade at Heston Blumenthal's acclaimed restaurant The Fat Duck, decided to buy the local pub in her sister's village in the Cotswolds countryside. It has since established itself as one of the best English countryside

dining experiences, garnering a raft of recent awards, including a top ten place in the 2016 Top 50 Gastropub awards, a third AA Rosette in 2015 and a place in the National Restaurant Award's UK's Top 100 Best Restaurants list in the same year.

Diners can also stay at this family friendly pub, which has five bedrooms and is around 90 minutes by train from London. www.thekinghamplough.co.uk

Guy Owen – The Idle Rocks, St Mawes, Cornwall, south-west England

Beautiful harbour views provide the backdrop for sampling the food of Guy Owen, who learned his craft at Gordon Ramsey's Michelin-starred restaurant in Claridge's and is now head chef at the **Idle Rocks** hotel restaurant in St Mawes, near Truro in Cornwall.

(www.idlerocks.com). Unsurprisingly for the coastal location, fish and shellfish dominate the menu and in spring sea bream is caught right outside the restaurant. All fish served is from local fishermen, the meat is from local farmers and vegetables are from the nearby Padstow Kitchen Garden. Among his speciality dishes is roasted scallop, white crabmeat and poached lobster tail. *The Times* voted The Idle Rocks number one in its 2015 Top Sunday Lunches list.



Guy Owen, head chef at Idle Rocks in beautiful St Mawes

Lee Westcott – The Typing Room, London

Among this young chef's fans is Jason Atherton, who appointed him head chef at two of his Hong Kong restaurants before backing the launch of his own restaurant **The Typing Room**, located in the Town Hall Hotel in the east end of London and offers an eclectic mix of global cuisine (www.typingroom.com). Westcott's other great mentor is Tom Aikens, who he worked for at his two eponymous Michelin-starred London restaurants. Over his relatively fledgling career Westcott has also worked at the critically acclaimed Noma in Copenhagen and Per Se in New York.

Martin Wishart – various locations in Scotland

Among Scotland's rising foodie stars is Martin Wishart, who left school at 15 to work as a kitchen apprentice and now runs four restaurants across Scotland after stints working with mentors including Albert Roux, Marco Pierre White, Charlie Trotter, Michel Roux Jnr and John Burton Race. His first restaurant, **Restaurant Martin Wishart**, in Leith, Edinburgh, and his second, **Martin Wishart at Loch Lomond** both hold a Michelin star. In addition, he has also opened branches of his brasserie-style **Honours** restaurant in Glasgow and Edinburgh, which is his home city. www.restaurantmartinwishart.co.uk, www.mwlochlomond.co.uk, www.thehonours.co.uk

Gareth Ward – Ynyshir Hall, west Wales

Gareth Ward, who has been head chef at the Michelin star rated Ynyshir Hall Hotel in Wales since 2013, is one of Wales' most talked about young chefs, having previously worked at the two Michelin-star rated Sat Bains restaurant in Nottingham, in central England.

His food has a strong focus on local produce, including lamb, Wagyu beef and organic pork. The hotel's kitchen garden also provides Ward and his team with a regular supply of vegetables, fruits, herbs and salads. In addition he makes good use of the local dramatic

scenery of west Wales by foraging for mushrooms, wild garlic, elderflower and eucalyptus. www.ynyshirhall.co.uk/dining

Danni Barry, Eipic, Belfast, Northern Ireland

After stints at L'Enclume and Rogan & Co in the Lake District, Danni Barry returned to her native Northern Ireland to become head chef at Michael Deane's **Eipic** (pronounced Epic). Her impact was swift – last year, just 18 months after it opened, the restaurant won a Michelin star. The tasting menu, offering seven courses based around produce from local suppliers, is among the main attractions at this Belfast restaurant. www.deaneseipic.com

Send yourself to cookery school!

Bake a traditional afternoon tea, experiment with doughnuts, gluten-free and vegan dishes and cook up world cuisines ranging from modern British to tasty Mexican. Add a cooking class to your itinerary to improve your kitchen skills and discover why Britain is the centre of the culinary universe.



Roll it, knead it, bake it and eat it at Bread Ahead

1. Bread Ahead Bakery & School, London

Situated among the artisanal food shops and stalls of historic Borough Market, close to London Bridge station, this purpose-built bakery is the perfect setting for bakers – aspiring and experienced – to get hands-on. Drawing on the expertise of chefs Matt Jones and Justin Gellatly, Bread Ahead runs a range of workshops and courses; from the half-day Ye Old English Baking Workshop, to a three-day sourdough bread class.

Popular topics include gluten-free, pizza and doughnut workshops, and lessons on authentic English-, French- and Nordic-style baking.

www.breadahead.com

2. Bodnant Cookery School, Conwy, north Wales

With a wide range of cookery courses, a wine school, culinary kid's academy, foodie weekends and five-star accommodation, there are plenty of reasons to visit this foodie heaven set in the foothills of the Snowdonia mountains. Get recipes and tips for entertaining family and friends at a Sunday kitchen demonstration, learn how to make pastry, temper chocolate and create macaroons on a half-day Ultimate Desserts class, become a certified wine connoisseur or learn essential preparation skills such as skinning, filleting and boning on a one-day Welsh fish & shellfish course. Whether you're a complete beginner or a budding chef, you'll find plenty of options and some of Wales' most beautiful scenery.

www.bodnant-welshfood.co.uk

3. The Cook School Scotland, Kilmarnock, Scotland

Learn how to create some delicious dishes from Scotland's natural larder with a one-day game cookery course, find out how to make perfect pastries and pies, or learn the art of

filleting fish, butchery and slicing vegetables with a knife skills course. Attend a demo & dine event with a chef demonstration and two-course meal, choose from a range of kids' classes, or opt for one on one cookery lessons with a personal chef. Half-day and full-day classes are available. Kilmarnock is 40 minutes by train from Glasgow, which has an international airport. www.cookschool.org

4. Belfast Cookery School, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Stephen Jeffers, a restaurateur and former Guinness family personal chef, heads this new school determined to "awaken, enliven or revitalise" your passion for cooking. Northern Ireland's first purpose-built cookery school, it offers classes for adults, kids and families on themes including a cocktail masterclass, dinner party hosting, Asian street food and Irish bread-making. Belfast, Northern Ireland's capital, is situated on the north-eastern coast of the island and has an international airport. Flights take around 90 minutes from London. <http://belfastcookeryschool.com>

5. The Raymond Blanc Cookery School, Oxford, south-east England

Raymond Blanc's cookery school is set amid the grandeur of his 13th-century manor house hotel, Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, with its two Michelin-starred restaurant. The cookery school offers classes ranging from half-day introductions and children's sessions, to dinner party master classes and a four-day residential programme. Individually tailored private cookery tuition can also be arranged for up to two hours (groups of one to three people). www.belmond.com/raymond-blanc-cookery-school

6. The Cookery School, Swinton Park, north Yorkshire, north England

Surrounded by a 17th-century castle and parkland, you can learn to create a traditional afternoon tea, take a beginners' baking class or spend a weekend cooking modern British cuisine with Michelin-trained chef Stephen Bulmer. Housed in the converted Georgian stable wing of four-star Swinton Park hotel, the school offers a range of hands-on two-day, one-day and half-day cookery classes for adults, teenagers and children, aged six to nine.

www.swintonpark.com/cookery-school



Learn how to prepare afternoon tea or the secrets of modern British cookery at Swinton Park

7. The Vegetarian Society Cookery School, Altrincham, Cheshire, north-west England

Whether you dine meat-free or just want to make healthier meals, you'll find demonstrations, courses, workshops and masterclasses for all skill levels at the headquarters of The Vegetarian Society. They range from the three-day introduction to vegetarian cooking, to one-day lessons on world cuisines such as Mexican, Indian and French. Interesting topics include foraging for wild food and gluten-free cooking; there's also a free one-day vegan workshop for young cooks aged 16 to 25. The school is located near Altrincham station, which is a 30-minute train ride from Manchester. www.vegsoccookeryschool.org

8. Leiths School of Food and Wine, London

Follow in the footsteps of the Duchess of Cambridge, who took a two-week cooking course at Leiths. Among a huge range of day and evening classes, you might want to take a four-day food writing course or spend two days studying food photography. The school is located in west London's Shepherds Bush district – a short walk from Stamford Brook Tube station.

www.leiths.com

27 cool cocktail bars

Shaken or stirred, muddled or mixed, Britain is full of fun places to sip on a perfectly concocted cocktail.

1. Dukes Bar, London

Wannabe 007s should head to the classy hotel bar that James Bond author Ian Fleming frequented. The immortal line 'shaken, not stirred' was first uttered here. Try the Fleming 89, a martini modelled on the writer's favourite perfume. www.dukeshotel.com/dukes-bar

The nearest Underground station is Green Park.

2. Kabinett, Liverpool, north-west England

Ever tried a wine-based cocktail? Kabinett specialises in curious combinations, such as the 'Pac-Man': Sauvignon Blanc, Limoncello and Maraschino shaken and topped with bitter lemon. The basement bar behind the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall also hosts live bands.

www.kabinettwinebar.co.uk

Liverpool is just over two hours from London by train.

3. Sub 13, Bath, south-west England

Sub 13 is a stylish cocktail bar with a lovely walled garden for al fresco drinking, or cosy candlelit vaults for romantic imbibing. Like what you taste? Book a cocktail making masterclass and learn how to shake your own delicious creation! <http://www.sub13.net>

Bath is 90 minutes from London by train.



4. Pleased To Meet You, Newcastle, north-east England

If you thought a gin and tonic was just that – gin plus tonic, maybe a squeeze of lime – think again. Experiment with London gins, fruit gins, 'secret ingredient' gins and more, served with artisan tonics and garnishes like peppercorns, orange peel and rosemary.

www.ptmy-newcastle.co.uk

Newcastle is three hours from London by train.

You'll be pleased to meet your drink at Pleased to Meet You in Newcastle

5. Mark's Bar at Hixter, London

The brainchild of famous London restaurateur Mark Hix, this new venture is a cocktail bar below trendy hotel Hixter that attracts a seriously hip crowd and is often full of bartenders on their days off - always an excellent sign of quality. www.hixter.co.uk

The nearest Underground station is Liverpool Street.

6. The Nightjar, London

Cocktails taste better with live jazz and blues music, don't they? Enjoy music, people watching and an inviting drinks list at one of east London's trendiest hangouts. Go local with a London Mule, which combines gin, beer and stout. www.barnightjar.com

The nearest Underground station is Old Street.

7. The Kelvingrove Café, Glasgow, Scotland

Located on one of Glasgow's most hip and happening streets, The Kelvingrove is the perfect place to start your night with a cocktail or three. The café hosts wine, sherry and gin tasting events and serves a lovely brunch if you visit during the day. www.kelvingrovecafe.com

Glasgow is easily reached by air from London, or by rail in 4 hours 30 minutes.

8. White Lyan, London

If instantaneous service is of concern, relax in the dark and minimalist White Lyan where the cocktails are all pre-made without ice cubes, citrus fruit or sugar and everything is stored in vast fridges for speed. Order a Bone Dry Martini: Mr Lyan vodka with extract of bone. www.whitelyan.com

The nearest Underground station is Old Street.

9. Ten Mill Lane, Cardiff, Wales

Don't expect your drink to come in a conventional vessel at fabulously quirky Ten Mill Lane, where jam jars and even a miniature wellington boot are used to serve up tasty concoctions – the latter is garden-themed 'The legend in the boot', comprised of cucumber, gin, elderflower and rose. <http://tenmilllane.com>

Cardiff is two hours from London by train.

10. Cloud 23, Manchester, north-west England

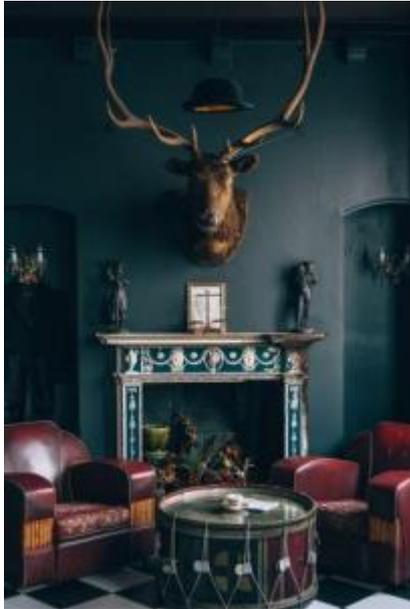
Manchester's highest point is crowned by sophisticated cocktail bar Cloud 23, that serves a cocktail to match: the Stratospheric is a berry and gin mixture that lays claim to being the tallest cocktail in Britain! www.cloud23bar.com

Manchester is just over two hours from London by train.

11. Happiness Forgets, Shoreditch, London

Londoners love Happiness Forgets in Shoreditch for its unpretentious approach – this is a real bar where knowledgeable bartenders make great cocktails for the most discerning drinker. Currently voted the 12th best bar in the world. www.happinessforgets.com

The nearest Underground station is Old Street.



12. The Milk Thistle, Bristol, south-west England

From the outside, it's hard to believe the Milk Thistle could possibly contain four floors; enter and be amazed. The décor is kooky, the atmosphere fun, but it's the drinks that steal the show. Expect twists on classics and unique inventions. <http://milkthistlebristol.com>

Bristol is 90 minutes from London by train.

13. Rita's, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Glamorous and opulent, Rita's is one of Belfast's hottest addresses, based in the historic Linen Quarter. A cool and characterful vibes make it easy for one Bloody Mary to turn into two and the bar staff are incredibly knowledgeable about their craft. www.ritasbelfast.com

Belfast is easily accessible from London by air.

Sip a drink beneath the parlour elk at eclectic bar The Milk Thistle

14. The Varsity Hotel, Cambridge, east England

For a drink with a view, head to The Varsity's rooftop bar and watch the sun set over the towers and turrets of Cambridge's university colleges while sipping the ultimate British cocktail, Pimms. www.thevarsityhotel.co.uk

Cambridge is around one hour from London by train.

15. The Hausbar, Bristol, south-west England

The perfect late-night spot for any Don Draper wannabes, the dark wood and warm golden lighting in this speak-easy style bar transports you back to a bygone era of cocktail drinking. www.hausbar.co.uk

Bristol is under three hours' drive west of London and just under two hours by train.

16. Head and Tales, Edinburgh, Scotland

Headquarters of the Edinburgh Gin distillery by day and cosy meeting place by night, Heads and Tales is the perfect place to wile the hours away with friends in a booth, nourished by well-made cocktails; make sure you try one with Edinburgh Gin. www.headsandtalesbar.com

Edinburgh is easily reached by air from London, or by rail is 4 hours 20 minutes.

17. Ladies & Gents, Kentish Town, London

Once a disused underground Victorian lavatory and now a neighbourhood bar that focuses on homemade liqueurs and syrups, botanicals and herbs on its cocktail menu. Beautiful glassware and quirky extras add extra cool points. www.ladiesandgents.co

The nearest Underground station is Kentish Town.

18. The Plotting Parlour, Brighton, south-east England

The Plotting Parlour combines expertly mixed cocktails with an intriguingly decorated setting – look up to admire the gramophone horns suspended from the ceiling, repurposed as lamps. Try The Beekeeper: the British summer in a glass.

www.facebook.com/theplottingparlour

Brighton is one hour from London by train.

19. The Botanist, Leeds, north England

Curious cocktail drinkers will have their thirst for something unusual quenched at The Botanist, where you can get everything from a Red Pepper and Porcini Manhattan to a Raspberry and Sage Watering Can. <http://thebotanist.uk.com>

Leeds is just over two hours from London by train.

20. The Last Word Saloon, Edinburgh, Scotland

The owners of esteemed Edinburgh cocktail bar Bramble launched this place in 2012 and it has attracted the coolest Scots to its shadowy, gothic interior since. Opening at 4pm daily, the staff apply a serious approach to cocktails, which range from classic to modern to downright experimental. Handily, the menu sports a glossary explaining the more unusual ingredients. www.lastwordsaloon.com

Edinburgh is easily reached by air from London, or by rail is 4 hours 20 minutes.



Relaxed hangout, delicious drinks and a yurt... Find all three at Milgi in Cardiff

21. The yurt in the garden at Milgi, Cardiff, Wales

An artsy, bohemian café bar serving up vegetarian food in an achingly hip environment, the real surprise is in the back garden. There you can enjoy cocktails made with locally sourced ingredients in an enormous Mongolian yurt packed with sofas, throws and disco balls. Also plays host to DJs, live bands, poetry sessions and interactive art exhibitions.

www.milgicardiff.com

Cardiff is two hours from London by train.

22. Under New Management, Manchester, north-west England

Another Prohibition-style bar that mixes a vintage atmosphere and sophisticated tipples. Formerly Corridor, this hidden late-night spot is popular at the weekends for its DJs spinning

Motown, soul, disco and pop into the small hours. In terms of cocktails, it's a small but perfectly formed list. www.corridorbar.co.uk

Manchester is just over two hours from London by train.

23. Babington House, Somerset, south-west England

A favourite of the moneyed west London set and part of the members club Soho House, Babington House's eclectically styled bar is the place to see and be seen outside of London. Popular with creative types, Oscar winner Eddie Redmayne was married there in 2014. www.babingtonhouse.co.uk

Catch train to Bath from London, a 90-minute journey. The hotel can arrange for a taxi from there.

24. The Zetter Townhouse, Clerkenwell, London

The eccentric décor makes this one of the most unusual bars in London. Drinks are simple and restrained, yet perfectly concocted. Generous table spacing affords plenty of privacy, though booking is always advisable. www.thezettertownhouse.com

The nearest Underground station is Barbican.

25. Ginger's Bar, Birmingham, central England

A warm and welcoming atmosphere, sleek but not too fancy design and knowledgeable staff make this a firm favourite. The cocktails are reasonably priced and contain indulgent ingredients like cinnamon sugar, fig liqueur and honey water. www.purnellsbistro-gingers.com/gingers-bar

Birmingham is 90 minutes from London by train.

26. Cocktail Shack, Brighton, south-east England

There's no shortage of quirky bars in Bohemian Brighton, and Cocktail Shack is no exception. Constructed from salvaged wood from Brighton's West Pier, it is full of candlelit tables, rustic features and a beach shack roof. Specialises in exotic rums. www.cocktailshackbrighton.co.uk

Brighton is one hour by train from London.

27. Alvino's, Newcastle upon Tyne, north-east England

A casual, late-night bar in Newcastle's city centre, Alvinos' entrance hides a sprawling three-level property full of cosy areas, retro pinball machines and foosball, plus a popular outside terrace. Fans of kitsch will love its cute cartoon cocktail menu brimming with interesting concoctions. www.alvinosbar.co.uk

Newcastle is three hours from London by train.

10 quirky cocktail bars

Cocktails have undergone something of a renaissance in recent years, and nowhere is this more true than in Britain, where cocktail bars masquerade as hairdressers, laboratories and bookshops. Mixology has elevated the best cocktail-making to a form of science, with drinks served up in everything from tin cans to bowler hats. There are plenty of glossy, gleaming cocktail bars but these ten offer something a little more offbeat - with drinks to match.

1. Lab 22, Cardiff, Wales

There's something deliciously secretive about Lab 22; a plain black door on a busy Cardiff street, sandwiched between a bakery and a kebab shop. Once down the stairs, however, the real fun begins; this prohibition-style bar offers complex cocktails that contain as much science as spirits. Go on a Monday night to sample the Moonshine Cocktail menu; themed around Prohibition-style drinks with live jazz and, for gin lovers, there's a range of unique gin-based cocktails, with ingredients including jalapeño peppers, camomile tea and avocado. www.lab22cardiff.com

2. Lounge Bohemia, London

If you're a fan of Instagramming your cocktails, this is the place to come – if you can find it. Tucked away, speakeasy-style, in London's trendy Hoxton area, there's a 1950s style to proceedings, with elegantly-dressed hostesses leading guests to their tables. Once there, the theatre really begins: cocktails come in books, toothpaste tubes and perfume bottles. Even the drinks menu is unusual; grab one of the books lying around and you'll find it a couple of chapters in. <http://loungebohemia.com>

3. The Old Bookshop, Bristol, south-west England

Quirky is the perfect word for this bar and small music venue, stuffed to the gills with upcycled *objets* and taxidermy. The cocktail bar, Cocktails at No 63, is like a bar within a bar, serving up alcoholic concoctions in gleaming jam jars, topped with frozen ice, fresh herbs and made from house-infused spirits. Food-wise, the team at the Old Bookshop let out the kitchen to pop-up restaurants and different chefs each month, meaning what will be on offer is always a delicious surprise. www.theoldbookshop.co.uk



Cocktails served with ceremony at Panda and sons

4. Panda and Sons, Edinburgh, Scotland

Style oozes out of Panda & Sons, which hides behind the facade of a vintage barbers, giving little hint of the alcoholic treats waiting in the elegant 1950s-style bar. The cocktails come with nice touches of theatre; some served in glass domes thick with infused dry ice, others come in tin cans and tea cups, or even Chinese teapots. Order the Monet Talks and you get fruit-based paints to play around with, as well as mixing your own Bellini. <http://pandaandsons.com>

5. Hillhead Bookclub, Glasgow, Scotland

Hillhead has as much to do with books as it does with hills; this former cinema in Glasgow's hip West End area has been converted into a seriously quirky venue, where you can drink cocktails out of gramophones, play 1990s computer games or take a turn at the ping pong table. Any drinks menu that includes cocktails called 'Beer and Loathing', 'Yes, Vicar' and 'X

Marks the Spot' has got to be worth exploring, and with strawberry mojitos for £3, you can stay all night without busting the budget. <http://hillheadbookclub.co.uk>

6. The Jekyll & Hyde, Birmingham, central England

Who says the Victorians never had any fun? The Victorian Gin Parlour at Jekyll & Hyde is deliciously decadent. It's only open Thursday to Saturday and offers a gin-and-food fusion menu. The drinks menu comes as 'Dr Henry Jekyll's Etiquette of Gins', and includes 'flights' where you can try a trio of different gins. Downstairs, 'Mr Edward Hyde's Notebook' offers candy-themed cocktails served in sweetie jars, while 'shared drinks' – with straws for up to four – come in bowler hats, watering cans and classic vintage flasks.

www.thejekyllandhyde.co.uk

7. Apartment, Belfast, Northern Ireland

After a £750,000 refit last year, Apartment has once again taken its place at the forefront of Belfast's cocktail culture, with mixologists serving up concoctions you won't find anywhere else in the city - from an Espresso Rush Hour, with chocolate sauce, or a Chocolate Cherry Martini. The crowning glory of Apartment is the roof terrace, the perfect spot for a summer sundowner - particularly on nights when there's live music, often acoustic guitar or lyrical singer-songwriters. <http://apartmentbelfast.com>



Orchid's skilled bartenders at work

8. Orchid, Aberdeen, north-east Scotland

Sink into one of the cosy, chocolate-leather booths at Orchid and take some time choosing your drink; the flavours involved may be not quite what you expect. Brie, basil and butterscotch all make an appearance, alongside lettuce, coffee and cucumber – innovative drinks that saw Orchid become the only British cocktail bar to be shortlisted for the Reykjavik Bar Summit – a global cocktail competition. www.orchidaberdeen.com

9. Apotheca, Manchester, north-west England

'Cocktails, intoxicants, liquors, liqueurs, potions and poisons' begins the drinks menu at Apotheca, a sign this is no ordinary cocktail bar. The mixologists behind the curved, 1930-stye bar offer familiar cocktails with a new twist; an Old Fashioned with salted caramel and orange rum, a Chocolate Orange mojito – and there are 'bottled cocktails' for up to four to share. If you fancy spicing it up, the Thai One mixes vodka with chilli, lemongrass, coriander and ginger. <http://apothecabar.co.uk>

10. 69 Colebrook Row, Islington, London

There's no sign for Colebrook Row, or any number on the wall; just look for the big lamp and go through the door beneath. The original creation of one of London's most renowned mixologists, Tony Conigliaro, don't come expecting daiquiris and mojitos; all the cocktails are created in Conigliaro's nearby lab and are unique to no 69; try the Honey Pollen Bellini or the Prairie Oyster, served in an oyster-shaped ceramic bowl. The bar itself is small and intimate, channelling a sleek, film noir feel. www.69colebrookerow.com

10 pub walks

Britain is famous for its cosy, historic, gourmet pubs, with plenty of established walks that take in several of these lovely venues along the way. Throw in some beautiful countryside or historic towns as you go and you've got a gorgeous day – or two! – of scenery, heritage and first-rate food and drink.

London

The Drink London tour takes in some of the capital's most historic watering holes, including The George Inn – where Charles Dickens sought literary inspiration – as well as one of the best preserved pubs in London, The Princess Louise, whose ornate Victorian interiors welcome curious tourists and locals alike. Led by a guide with a passion for pubs and history, the Drink London tour is a fantastic way to experience a true British institution.

www.visitbritainshop.com

Monmouthshire, south-east Wales

There are seven walks to choose from if you base yourself at The Bell pub in the village of Skenfrith – ranging from a gentle two mile/three km stroll to a six mile/9.5km walk with steep climbs. All trails return to this restored coaching inn and its award-winning restaurant, which is also a boutique hotel, should you wish to rest your weary legs for the night. The restaurant uses produce from its own kitchen garden and other items sourced from local suppliers, while the Dog and Boot Bar is aimed at muddy-booted walkers keen for a pint. Skenfrith is an hour's drive from Cardiff. www.skenfrith.co.uk

North Yorkshire, north England



Stop for a Ploughman's Lunch at The George Inn, while taking in the beautiful Yorkshire Dales on foot

This triangular four mile/seven km walk takes in three stellar pubs in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales. The village of Buckden is a great base thanks to the Buck Inn, a newly refurbished pub with rooms. Its breakfast – a full fry up – will set you up for a trek on the moors across to the hamlet of Cray, where you'll find The White Lion, which is hugely popular with

walkers and a superb place for a pint or even stay – there are bedrooms too. Next, head to Hubberholme, where you'll pass a 12th-century Norman church en route to The George Inn. Its ploughman's lunches (and a pint of locally-brewed beer) will set you up for the return leg to Buckden. The nearest city is Leeds, just over two hours by train from London.

www.thebuckinnbuckden.co.uk, www.bestpubinthedales.co.uk, www.thegeorge-inn.co.uk

Lake District, north-west England

An area packed with great pubs – and superb walks – the two come together especially well around Lake Windermere – just under four hours from London by train. Cross the lake on the Bowness Ferry and from there you start a three-hour walk. Head up to the superb views of Claife Heights, until you reach Far Sawrey and stop off for a drink at the Cuckoo Brow Inn. Further on, at Near Sawrey, you'll find Hilltop – the home of the famous children's writer Beatrix Potter, now owned by the National Trust. There's also Tower Bank Arms – a classic Lakeland pub – a whitewashed stone building that features in Potter's *The Tale of Jemima Puddleduck*. www.cuckoobrow.co.uk, www.towerbankarms.co.uk

Carmarthenshire, west Wales

The Dolaucothi Arms is situated on National Trust Estate property, an easy circular walk from the Dolaucothi Gold Mines. Start your walk at the pub and take in pretty woodland and riverside paths to the only known Roman mines in Britain; take a hard-hat underground tour and pan for gold at the National Trust visitor attraction before returning to the cosy pub for a traditional roast, local ale and a round of board games by the fire.

<http://thedolaucothiarms.co.uk>

Causeway coast, Northern Ireland

Build up an appetite on the six mile/ten km walk along the spectacular Causeway Coast, starting at Portrush (just over an hour's drive from Belfast) and ending at the iconic Bushmills Inn. Take in Portballintrae along your way, feasting your eyes on beautiful coastline, dramatic clifftops and an atmospheric castle. Once arrived at Bushmills, take a distillery tour to find out how the local tippie is made and then settle in for a sumptuous meal at the Bushmills Inn. Many nights see the bar fill up with people as traditional Irish bands play the perfect soundtrack to your dram of whiskey. www.bushmillsinn.com

The Cotswolds, west England

Quaint villages crowned by a series of delightful pubs – the Cotswolds is perfect walking country. And, if you like taking it easily this walk takes about two hours. Start at the small, pretty town of Burford and head to your first stop in the Windrush valley, the cosy 17th-century Maytime Inn in Asthall. Cross the river and head to the village of Swinbrook and local pub The Swan – *Downton Abbey* fans may recognise it, as it was where Sybil and Branson eloped to. Dine in style on seasonal dishes made with locally sourced produce. Work off your meal with a walk through Widford and Fulbrook and back to Burford – where you'll find a host of hostelrys. Try the cosy bar at the Lamb Inn. www.themaytime.com, www.theswanswinbrook.co.uk, www.cotswold-inns-hotels.co.uk/the-lamb-inn

Norfolk, east England

There are no mountains to climb here – Norfolk is a famously flat landscape – and this six mile/9.5km trek is best timed to the tides so you can walk along the beach. Start at posh gastropub The Victoria in the village Holkham, which serves breakfast until 11.00; you can stay here too. Then head along the beach where the final scenes of *Shakespeare in Love* were filmed before you hit The Crown at the town of Wells-next-the-Sea and then onto Stiffkey and its Red Lion pub. Set amid the marshes, you'll find great seafood and if you're footsore there are ten eco-minded bedrooms to stay in. The nearest train station is Kings Lynn, about 20 miles away, from which direct trains from London take just under two hours. www.holkham.co.uk/victoria, www.crownhotelnorfolk.co.uk, www.stiffkey.com



Cornwall's Gurnard's Head is the ideal end point to a beautiful coastal walk. Photo credit Paul Massey

Cornwall, south-west England

Discover some of Britain's most glorious coastal scenery on a two-hour walk in Cornwall (around a six-hour train journey from London). Base yourself at the Gurnard's Head on the headland near St Ives – a foodie, family-friendly pub with rooms. After a leisurely breakfast, pick up the footpath towards St Ives where you'll pass disused tin mines as you head inland to Zennor – a village loved by novelist DH Lawrence and where you'll find the historic Tinnars Arms. Built in 13th

century, it serves a good selection of local beer and offers a large menu. Return via the small museum at the village of Zennor and its ancient church and across farmland – in time for supper at the Gurnard's Head – you'll find everything from local fish to beef on the menu. www.gurnardshead.co.uk, www.tinnersarms.com

Glencoe, Scottish Highlands, Scotland

On a fine day, the views from Stob Dearg over the neighbouring hills and Rannoch Moor are breath-taking. Buachaille Etive Mor is a munro peak, so you could consider starting the 'munro-bagging' challenge here (climbing all 282 munros: mountains over 3,000ft/914m) – or you could just climb this one and then head to the award-winning Clachaig Inn, a classic hiker's and biker's pub with more than 200 whiskies to choose from and accommodation for those with tired legs. www.clachaig.com

Food destinations for serious lovers of eating

Fanatical about good food? If your travels tend to be based around the three key moments of the day – breakfast, lunch and dinner – head on a gourmet getaway to some of Britain's tastiest towns and villages.

1. Bray, Berkshire, south-east England

Located close to Windsor and right by the Thames is a slice of gourmet paradise that is home to many Michelin stars and a population of only around 7,500 people. Bray is where you'll find The Fat Duck, where Heston Blumenthal put snail porridge on the menu and established himself as one of the quirkiest and most brilliant chefs in the business. The Fat Duck reopened in October 2015 after a six-month stint in Australia with a new menu – rechristened the 'Journey' – and Michelin-stargazers will be watching with interest to see whether the restaurant retains its three stars www.thefatduck.co.uk



Michelin-star British food is on the menu at Heston Blumenthal's Hinds Head, Bray

Heston also owns the Hinds Head in Bray, a 'village pub' that was the location for Prince Phillip's pre-wedding stag party! Queen Elizabeth II has also entertained at the pub. Since Blumenthal took over, the pub has gained a Michelin star, but not through any oddball menu items: British food such as Scotch eggs, shepherd's pie and treacle tart are on offer, and are the ideal way for anyone still sceptical about the quality of British recipes to be proven wrong. www.hindsheadbray.com

The culinary tour continues at The Waterside Inn, located on the banks of the Thames and serving exquisite French food worthy of its three Michelin stars. It is run by renowned chef Alain Roux and the menu is described as 'unashamedly French', with the two-course 'menu gastronomique' through to the 'menu exceptionnel', a taster of around seven dishes. There's also an a la carte menu. www.waterside-inn.co.uk

Just along the river is the Hand and Flowers pub in Marlow, which became the first pub to win two Michelin stars in 2011. The menu combines British flavours with rustic French dishes

using seasonal ingredients, with a traditional roast beef and Yorkshire pudding available on Sundays. www.thehandandflowers.co.uk

Getting there: Reach Maidenhead by train from London Paddington (40-50 minutes) and take a taxi (five to ten minutes).

The Fat Duck's website has an accommodation section, which lists the Hand and Flowers pub, as well as luxury stately home Cliveden House Hotel. www.thefatduck.co.uk/Location

2. Abergavenny, south-east Wales

This picturesque town in Wales becomes a centre for gastronomy each September when its annual food festival is held. *The Observer* Food magazine declared that 'Abergavenny is to food what Cannes is to film', which gives an idea of the festival's importance. The Tuesday market takes place weekly, and is one of the best in Wales, with more than 200 stalls spread inside the impressive market hall and outside, with excellent local produce sold by people passionate about food. Restaurants and pubs in Abergavenny are known for their excellent



Excellent culinary standards at The Walnut Tree, Abergavenny. Credit VisitBritain/Rod Edwards

standards and one, The Walnut Tree (pictured), was described by a British food critic as 'one of the culinary wonders of Wales'. It offers local produce, and has produced a variety of inventive dishes, like sea bass with crab pancake and saffron sauce, and toffee rice pudding with pineapple. In spite of rave reviews, the price manages to reflect a special occasion without being out of the question (starters £8-12, mains £15-25). The town's butcher H. J. Edwards is a sight to behold for meat-lovers, with a hot-food counter boasting freshly-cooked pies, pasties and more, and cold meats and

cheeses that are perfect to take to the nearby countryside for a picnic. The excellent Griffin at Felin Fach pub was a 2015's Good Pub Guide award winner, and is only 40 minutes away by car. www.thewalnuttreeinn.com, www.felinfachgriffin.co.uk/Home.aspx

In addition to the edible attractions, the town is a great base to explore the Brecon Beacons National Park, with the Black Mountains forming a backdrop to the quaint lanes, riverbanks and meadows. History buffs will be interested in the Blaenavon World Heritage Site, a key location in the Industrial Revolution.

There are plenty of cute places to stay, from romantic cottages to boutique hotels. See www.visitabergavenny.co.uk for info.



Cheese stall at Borough Market. Credit VisitBritain/Joanna Henderson

Getting there: Abergavenny is a 35-40 minute train journey from Cardiff, and takes just under an hour to reach from there by car.

3. London

The capital of England has attracted the best chefs, budding top chefs and food lovers for years, and its multicultural character has ensured that a visit to London is a short trip around the world. You

can eat well on any budget, visiting lively Brixton market in the south for cheap and tasty Jamaican jerk chicken, or else heading into the City of London for old-fashioned British dishes at Michelin-starred haunt St John of Smithfield. The range in the capital is wide and visitors will be spoilt for choice. A tour with Mind the Gap will take you on a ‘tale of two markets: Brixton and Borough, with plenty of edible delights along the way.

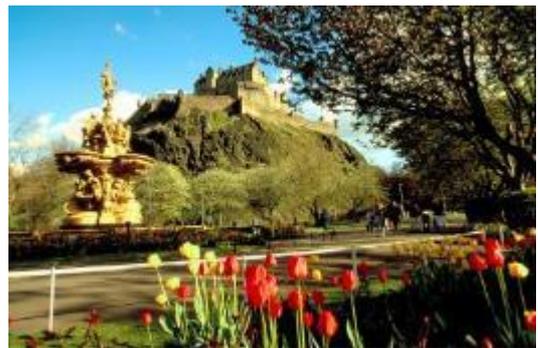
www.mindthegaptours.com

You can eat well in the city at any time of day, from breakfast at The Wolseley on Piccadilly or else an East End ‘greasy spoon’; lunch at one of the many Michelin-starred restaurants offering daytime dining deals, like Restaurant Gordon Ramsay or else buy a picnic from buzzing Borough Market; afternoon tea at 4pm at Fortnum and Mason, or the swanky Claridges; then dinner at... Dinner – Heston Blumenthal at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park hotel, or one of the hundreds of other places the city has to offer. www.thewolseley.com, www.gordonramsay.com, www.boroughmarket.org.uk, www.fortnumandmason.com, www.claridges.co.uk, www.dinnerbyheston.com

4. Edinburgh, Scotland

The capital of Scotland’s delights are many, from the impressive Edinburgh Castle that looms into view as you chug into the train station, then on to Princes Street, a shoppers’ paradise you’ll happen upon as soon as you descend from the train; out beyond the main centre is Leith, formerly a chaotic and insalubrious port area and now one of the city’s most desirable and trendy districts. None of this can be seen without regular pit-stops to sample the city’s fine eateries, Scotland’s delicious produce and, of course, the nation’s number one drink, whisky.

For high-quality Scottish produce, try The Grain Store, whose venison and lamb is local and served in an intimate dining room that looks out onto the lovely Victoria Street. The Castle Terrace offers mouth-watering contemporary dishes, whose Surprise Tasting menu for £75 is great for the adventurous eater, and should not only surprise but impress. Its kitchen is run by Dominic Jack; prior to the Castle Terrace he worked alongside friend and fellow chef Tom Kitchin. Tom’s original Edinburgh restaurant, The Kitchin in Leith, was one of the first places to put the area on the culinary map and Tom Kitchin was the youngest chef to receive a Michelin star, just six months after the restaurant opened. If you’re out at Leith to climb aboard the Royal Yacht Britannia, ensure you lunch or dine at The Shore, the area by the water and home to some of the city’s best eateries. The Ship on the Shore offers superb steamed Shetland mussels and other dishes from the sea, alongside champagne and good wine, making it a memorable place to celebrate an occasion, or just toast a newfound love of Edinburgh.



Edinburgh; top restaurants, farmer’s markets and great picnic destinations.

Edinburgh has numerous restaurants, but also a great Farmer’s Market that takes place every Saturday with the imposing backdrop of Edinburgh Castle behind it, at Castle Terrace. Picnic at Princes Street gardens, on perfect pies and gourmet crisps, and also get some of your gift-buying done at the craft and clothing stalls that also set up there.

For whisky, The Scotch Whisky Experience is a great place not only to sample the country's famous drink, but to learn about the many varieties, how they're made and even the myths and legends surrounding the amber liquid. The Amber restaurant on site has a menu of traditional Scottish foods to enjoy before and after sampling a dram or two.

www.grainstore-restaurant.co.uk, www.castleterracerestaurant.com, www.thekitchin.com, www.theshipontheshore.co.uk, www.scotchwhiskyexperience.co.uk

5. Belfast, Northern Ireland

You won't go hungry in Belfast – chances are, you'll be so full after breakfast you don't think you can eat any more...then so tempted by lunch you'll go for it anyway. You've heard of the full English breakfast – fried eggs, bacon, sausages, baked beans, mushrooms and the optional black pudding – well add in some white pudding, soda bread, potato bread, and



Belfast's MAC is home to one of the UK's top 50 coffee shops

maybe a slice of Guinness and malt wheaten bread and you've just made it an Irish breakfast. If you want to start the day well, stay the night at the sumptuous Rayanne's guesthouse in the Hollywood district, or else just pop over for brekkie even if you're not staying. In addition to the full Irish, their Gourmet Breakfast menu offers seven starters (including a great chilled creamed porridge) and 13 other mains, including scrambled eggs with crab and French toast topped with Clonakilty black & white pudding with apple compote. If you visit in the evening, book the Titanic menu, which faithfully recreates the meal served in the first-class dining room on board the fated ship www.rayannehouse.com,

Belfast's foodie scene is in full swing, with plenty of places to have a satisfying lunch. Two of the top choices are Italian; Il Pirata and Coppi who have embraced the new trend for 'cicheti' – little tapas style tasters that are ideal for sharing. The latter is right by the MAC (Metropolitan Arts Centre), well worth checking out for a dose of art and caffeine – the gallery's café 'Canteen' made it into *The Independent's* 50 best coffee shops in the UK and, if you've room for one, their chocolate scones are a treat too. www.coppi.co.uk, <https://themaclive.com>

Come dinner time, you're spoilt with options. Ox is a relative newcomer on the scene that has stolen the hearts of both locals and visitors alike, serving carefully chosen seasonal food with flair and a lack of pretentiousness. Other highlights include Shu Restaurant on Belfast's fashionable Lisburn Road, famed for its innovative use of top-quality local produce from seafood to Glenarm Shorthorn Beef. There's also the Mourne Seafood Bar, where you can inspect the catch of the day in the restaurant's window and then have locally caught fish and oysters. You can even learn to make it yourself, as the restaurant is also the site of the Belfast Cookery School. <http://oxbelfast.com>, www.shu-restaurant.com, www.mourneseafood.com, www.belfastcookeryschool.com

Getting there: *You can fly to Belfast International from some European cities, or both Belfast City and International airports from London and other UK cities in around one hour.*

6. Loch Fyne, Scotland

For lovers of seafood, there is no better place to head for than Loch Fyne, a sea loch that extends 45 miles inland on Scotland's west coast. Renowned for its oysters, the villages that dot the shoreline are home to some great pubs and seafood restaurants. The Fyne is part of the Seafood Trail, a driving route that links 11 different establishments offering the best local seafood and oysters. But it's just not shellfish that call the loch waters home; there are also great wildlife-spotting opportunities, with dolphins, seals and otters all inhabiting Loch Fyne. www.theseafoodtrail.com



Fresh Scottish shellfish

Getting there: *Loch Fyne is around one hour's drive from Glasgow; alternatively the train to Arrochar and Tarbet, on the shores of the loch, takes just over an hour.*

7. New Forest, Hampshire, south England

One of the most beautiful and historic areas in the south of England, the New Forest dates back 1,000 years. In recent years, it has also become something of a foodie destination, with many village inns reinventing themselves as 'gastropubs', such as The Pig, The East End Arms and The Oak Inn in Lyndhurst. The introduction of the New Forest Marque, which signifies local produce, is a great way to identify meats, fruit and vegetables that have been grown in the area. Many hotels and bed and breakfasts in the area have also signed up to the 'New Forest Breakfast' scheme, which ensures that at least three main ingredients of the breakfast must come from the New Forest area. www.thepighotel.com, www.eastendarms.co.uk, <http://oakinnlyndhurst.co.uk>, www.newforestproduce.co.uk

Getting there: *The New Forest is around 90 minutes' drive south-west of London. Trains to Brockenhurst take 90 minutes from London Waterloo.*

8. Canterbury, Kent, south-east England

The orchards and farmland that characterise the Kent countryside, in the south-east corner of England, has led to the country being known as the 'Garden of England.' It's fitting, then, that the first daily farmers market in the country was in Canterbury, where local farmers, speciality producers and artisan bakers all come to sell their produce. The Goods Shed is a converted warehouse next to Canterbury West station, which now houses a number of food stalls, a deli, and a renowned restaurant that takes the best produce from the market to make hearty, modern British dishes. www.thegoodshed.co.uk

Getting there: *Canterbury is around 90 minutes' drive south-east of London, or one hour by train from St Pancras.*



9. Padstow, Cornwall, south-west England

The Cornish fishing village of Padstow, on the north coast of Cornwall in south-west England, has become synonymous with one man: Rick Stein. The chef first opened a restaurant in the village in 1974. He now owns four restaurants, a

Padstow, Cornwall, boasts four restaurants by top chef Rick Stein

seafood cookery school and several places to stay, and is so associated with the village that it is often referred to as Padstein. It's a charming place to visit, with shops, pubs and eateries lining the harbour, from which a small fishing fleet still heads out each morning. The village sits on the shore of the river Camel, and there are regular taxi boats across the river to the opposite village of Rock. At low tide there are some lovely beach walks, perfect to work up an appetite for a seafood supper. www.rickstein.com

Getting there: *Padstow is around five hours' drive from London. The nearest station is Bodmin Parkway, approx. four hours from London Paddington, which is a 40-minute drive from Padstow by bus or taxi.*

10. Carmarthenshire, west Wales

Only when seven stars emerge in the sky is it deemed dark enough for the coracle fishermen of Carmarthenshire to head out and catch salmon and sewin (also known as sea trout). The practice of fishing by moonlight in round-bottomed boats is an ancient one, still carried out today; look out for sewin on menus locally or head to Carmarthen-based deli Blasus to pick up smoked sewin for a gourmet picnic.

The food-lover's haven stocks delicious locally made chocolate –Kylie Minogue is a fan– as well as artisan breads and Welsh cheeses. Sample another local foodie highlight at Carmarthen's thriving market: Carmarthen ham. Made to the same recipe for generations, the Romans are said to have pinched the technique and taken it back to Italy with them, thus 'inventing' Parma ham! A somewhat better-kept secret, Etta's Royal Cake has been made to the same recipe for decades and even Prince Charles wasn't let in on the formula when he asked for it, but still ordered the fruit cake for his wedding to Camilla Parker-Bowles.

While visiting the delightful National Botanic Garden of Wales, it's easy to get distracted by the nearby Wright's Food Emporium, a temple to all things tasty and a cosy place to fuel up before some garden-gadding. For a sumptuous dinner afterwards, head to Y Polyn, which was listed in the 2015 *Michelin Guide* to pubs thanks to its simple take on British classics, using only the best produce and serving it up in a gorgeous riverside setting.

www.blasusdeli.co.uk, www.carmarthenshiremarkets.co.uk/carmarthen,
www.wrightsfood.co.uk, <http://ypolyn.co.uk>

Getting there: *Carmarthen is just over an hour's drive from Cardiff, or 1 hour 40 minutes by rail.*

Extraordinary eateries

Always wanted to dine among the treetops? Or how about surrounded by deep-sea fish in a world-class aquarium? Britain serves up the quirkiest side of restaurant locations.

Treehouse Restaurant, Alnwick Gardens, Northumberland, north-east England



Fairytale charm is all around at Alnwick Gardens' Treehouse Restaurant

Feasting on a delicious meal while perched high in the treetops of mature lime trees may feel like something straight out of a scene from a gastronomic fairytale but it's reality at Alnwick Gardens' Treehouse Restaurant. This enormous treehouse is crafted from sustainably sourced Canadian cedar, Scandinavian redwood and English and Scots pine and features a roaring log fire and trees growing through the floor. Diners reach the restaurant via sky high walkways and wobbly rope bridges. Dishes range from local fish and seafood to meat from Northumberland's

farmlands and regional specialities. It's two minutes' drive from Alnwick Castle – itself an inspiration for Harry Potter's Hogwarts, and where many of the film franchise's scenes were filmed – magical! www.alnwickgarden.com/explore/whats-here/the-treehouse/restaurant

How to get there: The Gardens are around a 40-minute drive north of Newcastle, north-east England, or less than two hour's drive south of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Restaurant Story, Bermondsey, London

Built on the site of former public toilets, Restaurant Story serves up a theatrical, delicious and memorable dining experience. Head chef Tom Sellers is one of the capital's youngest and hottest talents, having gained the restaurant a Michelin star in its first year of opening. Choose between the Full Story menu or set lunch menus; divided into chapters, sit back and let the master storyteller/chef entertain you with dishes intriguingly named 'Childhood', 'Sea', 'Land' and – for a sweet finish – 'The End'. While Story doesn't retain the feel of a toilet, The Attendant, a quirky coffee bar in London's Fitzrovia, has put its setting to good use. The Victorian public convenience has been scrubbed up and now serves sandwiches and coffees in a cosy subterranean setting, complete with original porcelain urinals to admire. www.restaurantstory.co.uk, www.the-attendant.com

How to get there: The nearest Underground station to Story is Bermondsey; the nearest to The Attendant is Godge Street.

Clink Restaurant – HMP Cardiff, Wales

A simple aim – to reduce reoffending rates – has led to the opening of restaurants in several British prisons. The Clink Charity, in conjunction with Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMP), opened the first venue, Clink Cymru, at HMP Cardiff where around 30 prisoners from there, and nearby HMP Prescoed, work within the 96-cover restaurant and kitchen. Diners will discover how the restaurant promotes the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners, who cook and serve both organic produce from Wales as well as including fruit, meat, vegetables, poultry and herbs supplied by the farms and gardens at Prescoed. Most importantly, the food is top-notch and service is excellent. There are also Clink Restaurants

at HMP High Down (Surrey, south-east England), HMP Brixton in south London and HMP Styal in Cheshire, north-west England. The Clink Charity aims to open ten more restaurants by 2017. <http://theclinkcharity.org/the-clink-restaurants>

How to get there: Cardiff is a two-hour train journey from London Paddington.

Petersham Nurseries Café, Surrey, south-east England

Purchase plants, antiques and garden ornaments from this celebrated garden centre at Petersham Nurseries in Richmond, then dine on delicious seasonally inspired food. The menu's dishes are created with naturally sourced ingredients supplemented with edible flowers, herbs and heritage vegetable varieties from the nurseries' walled kitchen garden. It's a haven of calm in the capital. <http://petershamnurseries.com>

How to get there: A fast train from London Waterloo takes just 15 minutes to reach Richmond.



Shop for plants then dine on meals in the Café created with the ingredients growing at Petersham Nurseries. Credit David Lotus

Two Rivers, The Deep Aquarium, Hull, north England

It doesn't get much more unique than dining in an underwater tunnel, surrounded by sharks, turtles and fish of all colours and sizes. It may sound like something from *The Little Mermaid*, but it is, in fact, Two Rivers, the restaurant amazingly located in the depths of The Deep, Hull's star attraction. Start with a tour of the aquarium with an expert member of staff before being seated at a table surrounded by sealife, to enjoy delicious food served by enthusiastic staff – unforgettable.

www.thedeep.co.uk/two-rivers-restaurant

How to get there: Hull is around two hours 30 minutes from London by train.

The Barn Bistro, Burniston (near Scarborough), Yorkshire, north England

Thankfully the animals have all moved out, and this converted traditional farm building – still retaining a rustic charm – is home to The Barn Bistro. There's a Yorkshire-inspired menu for breakfasts and lunches, plus traditional Sunday lunches, afternoon teas and a monthly special menu event. Diners will certainly experience the venue's farmyard roots – children are invited to feed the onsite chickens, and the land rotivated by the restaurant's pigs each summer becomes a Potager-style kitchen garden each spring, with home-grown vegetables, such as squashes, cabbages, Swiss chard, French beans and fennel, being planted.

<http://thebarnbistro.com>

How to get there: Scarborough is around an hour's drive from York.



British Pullman/Northern Belle trains, England

Marry the elegance of a 1920s' train with champagne, fine wines and seasonal dishes on board the Belmond British Pullman. The sister train to the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, the Pullman departs from London Victoria to travel through the British countryside while guests feast on meals

Change of courses, changing views; lunch on the British Pullman or Northern Belle trains

where each course is inspired by the views from the window; the chefs create menus using the local produce of the regions the train travels through. You'll be equally inspired by the train's heritage; the luxury carriages have carried royalty and dignitaries, the oldest carriage dates back to 1925 while others survived bomb damage during air-raids over Victoria Station in 1940.

Sister train the Belmond Northern Belle offers a similarly creative five-course lunch, while racing through the stunning countryside of northern England, with departures from Leeds, York and Manchester. www.belmond.com/web/luxury/home.jsp

On board a canal boat, Birmingham, central England

If you like your views to change as you change courses, Away2Dine operates a cruising restaurant travelling along the canals of Birmingham. The three-hour cruise means dinner or Sunday lunch is enjoyed at a leisurely pace. Cruises take you through the city's original canal from 1769, as well as travelling out to the countryside on historic canals, such as the Birmingham Old Main Line and the Worcester & Birmingham Canal.

www.away2dine.co.uk/index.html

How to get there: Birmingham is around 90 minutes by train from London Euston.

Cottiers, Glasgow, Scotland

Sit on salvaged church chairs, and marvel at the gold ceilings and handcrafted gilt mirrors that pepper the décor at Cottiers restaurant, situated in a church conversion in Glasgow, which is also home to a theatre and bar. Named after Daniel Cottier, a revolutionary artist-designer who decorated the building when it was built in 1865, the restaurant's menu is fully focused on using fresh Scottish ingredients, with produce such as West Coast mussels, Stornoway black pudding fritters and burgers served with Isle of Mull Cheddar and smoked Ayrshire bacon are just an example of what's found on the menu. Tie a meal in with handcrafted Scottish ales matchings. www.cottiers.com

How to get there: The restaurant is located in the West End of Glasgow, a ten-minute taxi ride from Glasgow Central station.

Circus, London

Choose the stage table at this unique venue and you'll be at the centre of the action – not just as far as dining is concerned, but also regarding the nightly cabaret display! Entertainment may include singers, dancers and aerial contortionists performing above your heads, with some of the acrobatic action taking place on the actual table. Meanwhile, the spectacle on your plate – excellently cooked Pan-Asian cuisine – is just as memorable. Roll up, roll up!

<http://circus-london.co.uk>

The nearest Underground station is Covent Garden.

Restaurants with rooms

There's nothing nicer than eating a sumptuous banquet in delightful surroundings, then knowing those surroundings are yours – and all you need to do is head out of the dining room and roll straight into bed! Discover classic and contemporary restaurants with rooms for the ultimate gourmet getaway.

1. Patricks With Rooms, Mumbles, south Wales

Located in the picturesque village of Mumbles, Patricks offers a warm welcome, top-notch cuisine and a range of luxurious bedrooms, all with gorgeous sea views. The menu changes with the seasons, though you're guaranteed to find Welsh beef steak on the menu throughout the year as well as fresh fish and seafood. Herbs and salad leaves are grown in Patricks' very own greenhouse and ice cream comes from Joes, a local company with legendary status in south Wales. Walk dinner off with a stroll along the bay before cosying up in one of the 16 individually designed bedrooms, safe in the knowledge that a delicious Welsh breakfast awaits you in the morning. Mumbles is the gateway to the Gower Peninsula, Britain's first designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

www.patrickswithrooms.com

***Getting there:** Mumbles is around 15 minutes by taxi from Swansea, which is three hours 30 minutes from London by train.*

2. Russells of Broadway, Worcestershire, west England

Broadway is one of the most picturesque of all the Cotswolds villages and Russells sits at its very heart, a beautiful house built of traditional honey-coloured stone. The restaurant serves modern British cuisine using local Vale of Evesham and Cotswold produce, while the indulgent puddings have to vie for attention with an excellent range of local cheeses. The Cotswolds is one of Britain's most beautiful areas, with rolling hills and idyllic villages, and the town of Stratford upon Avon, famous as the birthplace of Shakespeare, is under an hour's drive away. www.russellofbroadway.co.uk

***Getting there:** Broadway is around two hours' drive west of London; nearest train station is a 20-minute taxi ride away at Moreton-in-Marsh (90 minutes from London Paddington).*

3. The Pig, New Forest, Hampshire, south England

With all the ingredients you need for a luxurious country retreat, The Pig is a popular choice for Londoners wishing to swap the bustle of the capital for peace, quiet and exceptional food. The menu changes 'by the minute', as it depends on what the forager discovers in the grounds or nearby New Forest, or what's in peak condition in the Kitchen Garden. The cuisine is Modern British, with influences from both forest and coast. You might start with Black Pudding Balls, continue with a New Forest Wild Mushroom Soup, continue with Dorset Coast Pollock Fillet & Hampshire Chorizo and end with a Warm Earl Grey Scented Chocolate Torte. Then the next step is to flop into the delightful bedrooms – some of which feature free-standing baths and others located in cabins and lodges – and dream of breakfast.

www.thepighotel.com/brockenhurst

Getting there: The Pig is less than two hours' drive from London.

4. Barley Bree, Perthshire, central Scotland

Roaring fires, gleaming wooden floors and exposed brickwork give the Barley Bree a wonderfully cosy feel in the winter months, while in summer the pretty garden is the perfect spot for an aperitif. Fabrice (in the kitchen) and Alison (pouring the wine) create a lovely relaxed feel, serving up hearty dishes such as Ochil Hills pheasant breast with pearl barley or west coast lobster ravioli. The six charming rooms have a cool, contemporary feel and the pub makes a great base for exploring the surrounding area, including the magnificent Stirling Castle (around half an hour's drive) and the rugged Loch Lomond National park.

www.barleybree.com

Getting there: Muthill is around one hour's drive north of Edinburgh and Glasgow; the nearest train station is a 20-minute taxi ride away at Gleneagles (which is one hour from Edinburgh).

5. The Marquis at Alkham, Dover, Kent, south-east England

The Kent countryside has long been known as the Garden of England, and the Marquis makes the most of local produce, with dishes such as colourful 'Textures of Beetroot' to start, local cod with samphire as a mouth-watering main, and lip-smacking desserts using local Kentish fruit. Wines and beers from local producers are well-represented, and the Marquis also does a spectacular afternoon tea with hand-made pastries and delicate sandwiches. The ten bedrooms have a sleek, unfussy style, all with gorgeous views across the surrounding hills. www.themarquisatalkham.co.uk

Getting there: Alkham is 90 minutes south-east of London, and just ten minutes from the Eurotunnel and Dover's port and cruise terminal. Dover Priory station is less than four miles away (less than two hours from London Charing Cross).

6. Kilberry Inn, Tarbet, Argyll, Scotland

From the outside the Kilberry looks an unassuming kind of place; the low, white-washed walls and red tin roof give little sign of the culinary treats on offer inside. The menu makes the most of the fantastic seafood from the west coast, with recipes kept simple to make the most of ingredients such as hand-dived scallops, crab and very local mackerel. There are five comfortable rooms to stay in, and the surrounding countryside offers great walks, deserted beaches and excellent wildlife-spotting, including otters and rare birds.

www.kilberryinn.com

Getting there: The Kilberry Inn is less than three hours' drive from Glasgow; Arrochar and Tarbet station is around 90 minutes from Glasgow Queen Street station.

7. The Cors, Laugharne, west Wales

Laugharne was described by Dylan Thomas as 'the strangest town in Wales', an accolade most residents would be proud to say still holds true today. There's something special about this seaside village and you may encounter characters that seem straight out of the pages of

Under Milk Wood (which Thomas wrote while living in Laugharne) at The Cors, a warm, welcoming restaurant with just three quirkily-decorated rooms hidden away from the main drag amid exotically landscaped grounds. Food is served in a romantic room lit by candles, and dishes change daily depending on what is on season and best available locally. Look out for Salt Marsh Lamb on the menu, as well as Carmarthen Ham – a truly local speciality.

www.thecors.co.uk

Getting there: *Laugharne is around a one hour 20 minute drive from Cardiff.*

8. The Yorke Arms, Nidderdale, Yorkshire, north England

Surrounded by the tranquil rolling countryside of the Yorkshire Dales, the Yorke Arms is a former 18th-century coaching inn that has been carefully converted into a Michelin-starred restaurant, with a clutch of sumptuously comfortable bedrooms. Co-owned and run by Frances Atkins, one of only six female Michelin-starred chefs in Britain, the restaurant serves up the best Yorkshire produce, from Whitby crab to Wensleydale soufflé and local beef.

www.yorke-arms.co.uk

Getting there: *Nidderdale village is around one hour east of York. The nearest train station is a 45-minute taxi drive to Harrogate (around three hours from London Kings Cross).*

9. The Checkers, Montgomery, mid Wales

Awarded a Michelin star, this restaurant in mid Wales, run by chef proprietor Stéphane Borie, offers classic French cooking married with a comprehensive wine list and local real ales. Housed in a former coaching inn, there are also three en-suite rooms available.

www.thecheckersmontgomery.co.uk

Getting there: *Montgomery is around a two-hour drive north of Cardiff. The nearest train station is Newtown (seven miles from Montgomery), which can be reached from Cardiff in less than three hours.*

10. Bushmills Inn, Bushmills, Co. Antrim, N Ireland

The Bushmills Inn is the perfect base for exploring some of Northern Ireland's most impressive sites, including the Giant's Causeway, Bushmills distillery and Dunluce Castle, and after a day's sightseeing it offers wonderful local food and a comfortable room for the night. Traditional Irish dishes are on offer, alongside spectacular seafood platters and hearty steaks, but you need to make sure there's room for the sumptuous sticky toffee pudding. The fire-lit Gas bar is a great place for a pre-dinner Guinness or nip of whisky – it's the only place, except the distillery itself, where you can sample a 12-year-old Bushmills whiskey – soft, smooth and warming. www.bushmills.com

Getting there: *Bushmills is just over an hour's drive north of Belfast. There is no train service to Bushmills; a daily bus leaves Belfast at 09.00.*

British regional specialities

Bakewell pudding/tart

What is it?: Have your sweet tooth at the ready – this is a pastry tart packed with almond flavouring topped with raspberry or cherry jam. The tart is distinct from the Bakewell pudding, which is a dessert made with flaky pastry, a layer of jam and an almond filling.

What's the story?: Said to have originated in the attractive market town of Bakewell in Derbyshire, central England, it's thought that the pudding was the original version and can be traced back to the 16th century. There is some debate on how the pudding became a tart, but the general accepted view is a cook made a mistake with the recipe.

Where can I eat it?: Bakewell of course! If you want to find out more about the product while you're eating it, the Old Original Bakewell Pudding Shop is a good place to start – it's said to be here that the first was served in 1860. Hand-made to a secret recipe, you can enjoy the puddings in the restaurant above the shop and during an afternoon tea. Elsewhere, you can purchase the sweet treat from the Bakewell Pudding Parlour café and restaurant and then head upstairs for a glass of wine at its bar.



The famous Old Original Bakewell Pudding Shop – worth a visit!

Bakewell is a bus ride from Matlock, which is around two hours 30 minutes by train from London's St Pancras.

www.bakewellpuddingshop.co.uk, www.postapudding.com

Cornish pasty

What is it?: Succulent meat and vegetables encased in warm, golden pastry and, if it's a genuine Cornish pasty – that is, made in Cornwall, south-west England – it has to have a distinctive 'D' shape and be crimped on one side.

What's the story?: A long one: the Oxford English Dictionary suggests that the pasty was identified in around 1300. By the 18th century it was well established as a Cornish food staple, eaten by poorer working families who could afford the cheaper ingredients of potatoes, onion and swede, plus its size and shape meant it was easy for miners and farm workers to transport. The pasty was one of the first fast foods!

Where can I eat it? Pretty much the moment you cross the county border into Cornwall, you can pick up a pasty in a butcher shop or bakery. Malcolm Barnecutt has several bakeries around Cornwall selling hand-made goods made fresh overnight, plus two restaurants where you can linger over a pasty, one in St Austell and one in Bodmin. Rowe's Bakeries, also dotted throughout the county, make award-winning pasties, with four bakeries in the coastal town of Falmouth alone.

Trains from London go to various places in Cornwall, and take between four and five hours depending on your chosen destination. www.barnecutt.co.uk, www.rowsbakery.co.uk

Haggis

What is it?: One of Scotland's most famous dishes, haggis is a savoury pudding containing sheep offal mince mixed with oatmeal, suet and spices. Traditionally encased in a sheep's stomach, nowadays it's mostly prepared in a sausage casing, and served with 'neeps and tatties' (turnip and potato) and, of course, a wee dram of whisky.



A fine Scottish tradition; haggis and whisky

What's the story?: The exact origins of the haggis aren't known – there is some research to suggest it originates from the days of Scottish cattle drovers, who took haggis to eat on their long journey through the Highlands, yet there are other stories that claim it was carried to Scotland aboard a Viking ship. However, it's been considered a Scottish national dish since Robert Burns penned *Address to a Haggis* in 1787 and which is traditionally recited on Burns' Night as the haggis is brought in. But one thing it definitely *isn't* is a 'wild furry three-legged beast of the

Highlands that lurks into the cities at night, like a fox', however tempting that story may be to tell visitors! (Some 'inventive' Scottish tour guides like to tell tourists this version of the story!)

Where can I eat it?: You'll find it on many a menu in Scotland; for fine dining options in Edinburgh, the Wedgwood Restaurant serves a choice of haggis with its Scottish fillet of beef or you can eat it at the city's only haggis and whisky pub, aptly named the Arcade Haggis & Whisky Pub. At Babbity Bowsters in Glasgow you'll find chicken stuffed with haggis on the menu and chic Arisaig in the Merchant City neighbourhood is another great place to try the national dish. www.wedgwoodtherestaurant.co.uk, www.arcadepub.co.uk, www.babbitybowster.com, <http://arisaigrestaurant.co.uk>

Kendal Mint Cake

What is it?: A peppermint-flavoured confectionery – not a cake as the name suggests – handmade in traditional open-topped copper pans, originating from Kendal in Cumbria, north-west England, home of the Lake District. It's popular among climbers and mountaineers as a powerful source of energy.

What's the story?: The tale has it that the cake was created when a batch of peppermint creams mixture was left overnight by mistake with the solidified mint cake found in the morning. There are currently three companies producing mint cake in Kendal; Romney's, whose mint cake was the first to be carried to the summit of Mount Everest in 1953; Quiggins, the oldest-surviving mint cake company that has operated in Kendal since 1880; and Wilson's, founded in 1913 and which also sells a Beatrix Potter range of sweets.

Where can I eat it?: You'll find Kendal mint cakes galore at the Mintcake Mine Shop in Bowness on Windermere, a 20-minute drive from Kendal, but it's easy to find Kendal mint cake in sweet shops, supermarkets or village stores across the Lake District.

www.mintcakemine.co.uk

Melton Mowbray pork pie

What is it?: Fresh, chopped pork encased in jelly and a crunchy pastry; the Melton Mowbray pork pie has a distinctive bow shape, distinguishing it from other pork pies. It is also a European Union-protected food name.

What's the story?: In the 18th century the pie was baked in a clay pot with a rough 'parcel' of pastry around a pork filling, allowing it to be carried at work – it was often taken by servants and grooms accompanying their masters on hunts in the Melton area (in Leicestershire, central England). The pie evolved to feature an edible crust pastry and bone-stock jelly, which would fill the air spaces to preserve the meat for longer and make sure the pie didn't crumble when jumping over ditches on horseback. The Melton Mowbray pie is distinctive in that it is baked free-standing and the meat used is fresh pork so cooks to a naturally grey colour rather than the pink colour of cured pork found in other pork pies.



Melton Mowbray pork pies – so distinguished they are a European Union-protected food name

Where can I eat it?: Find authentic Melton Mowbray pork pies in Melton Mowbray itself with a visit to Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe; Dickinson & Morris has been baking pork pies here since 1851, making it the oldest pork pie bakery in town. You can also find the original pork pie recipe baked at Mrs King's Pork Pies, 20 minutes from Melton Mowbray in Cotgrave, Nottinghamshire, which has been a small family bakery since 1853 and sells pies that have won several awards.

www.samworthbrothers.co.uk/Our-Businesses/Dickinson-Morris,
www.mrskingsporkpies.co.uk

Pie, mash and liquor

What is it?: Quite simply, minced beef pie, mashed potato and the special liquor, which is a rich parsley sauce. The pies began life as eel pies, when there was an abundance of eels in the River Thames, but over time they began to be made with minced beef and onion. You can still find jellied eels served in many pie and mash shops.

What's the story?: Eel, pie and mash houses have their roots firmly in east London; they're a true Cockney food story. Although the houses were a Victorian creation, the food had been sold on stalls since the 18th century.

Where can I eat it?: Pie shops are found all over London, particularly in the East End. Try London's oldest pie and mash shop, M. Manzes in south-east London, where they still use the same recipes today for the pies and liquor as they did in 1902 when it first opened (try the jellied or stewed eels on sale there too). Or, if you head to Tony's Pie and Mash Shop in Waltham Abbey, Essex (half an hour by train from London), you might get more than the food – it's reportedly one of David Beckham's favourite places to eat! www.manze.co.uk,
www.facebook.com/pages/Tonys-Pie-And-Mash-Shop/143210232408225

Soda farls

What is it?: A quick-baked bread using sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) instead of yeast, which is a firm part of Ireland's food history – in Northern Ireland it's known as soda farls.

What's the story?: 'Farls' comes from the Ulster Scot word fardel, which means 'a fourth'. The dough is flattened and then divided into four. The breads are hearty fare and are served with both butter and jam or with savoury foods such as smoked salmon or bacon.

Where can I eat it?: Soda bread is served in a traditional Northern Irish fry up alongside two eggs, two bacon, two sausages, potato bread, hash brown, mushrooms, beans, tomato and chips at popular Maggie May's (where it's billed as the perfect hangover cure), or in elegant surroundings at the Great Room restaurant at the city's Merchant Hotel – enjoy its eggs benedict served on soda bread. A wholesome breakfast and gluten-free farls are served at Belfast favourite Slim's Healthy Kitchen. <http://maggiemaysbelfastcafe.co.uk>, www.themerchanthotel.com/index.php/dining-at-the-great-room.html, www.slimskitchen.com

Welsh laverbread

What is it?: Not bread of any sort, as the name suggests, laverbread is a traditional Welsh delicacy made of nutritious seaweed harvested from rocks off the Welsh coast, which is washed, cooked, then minced into a thick black/green paste. You'll hear it referred to as 'bara lawr' in Welsh.

What's the story?: In the early 19th century, laverbread formed part of the traditional breakfast (with bacon, sausages and mushrooms) that Welsh miners would eat to prepare for the long working day ahead. Yet there is evidence that the first written description of it appeared in a 1607 copy of *Britannia*, describing the springtime gathering of 'lhawvan' from the beaches of Pembrokeshire, west Wales.

Where can I eat it?: Why not try bara lawr with another Welsh delicacy harvested from the country's coastlines – cockles (chocos)? You'll find them on the menu at country pub The Smith Arms Restaurant in Foelgastell, near Llanelli in south-west Wales, with the laverbread baked with bacon and leeks. Discover it on the seasonal menus at foodie heaven, the Bodnant Welsh Food Centre in north Wales; you'll find it matched with plenty of other treats from Wales' natural larder and locally sourced produce. www.thesmithsarms.co.uk, www.bodnant-welshfood.co.uk

Yorkshire pudding

What is it?: A traditional British Sunday roast dinner would not be the same without Yorkshire pudding – a pudding made of eggs, flour and milk and usually served with roast meat and gravy, although it can also be served with jam, syrup or custard as a dessert.

What's the story?: It's not really known when the Yorkshire pudding first made an appearance on British



Yorkshire pudding – a must with a Sunday roast

plates, but the first-ever recorded recipe features in the early 18th century book *The Whole Duty of a Woman*. It was called a Dripping pudding in here – the dripping (the fat and juices) coming from spit-roast meat.

Where should I eat it?: Wherever you see signs in restaurants or pubs serving a Sunday roast, you can pretty much guarantee it will come with Yorkshire pudding. But why not head to Yorkshire in north England to enjoy the region as well as its pudding! The award-winning traditional village inn, The Carpenters Arms, in the village of Felixkirk, near Thirsk in north Yorkshire, serves a Sunday lunch menu where Yorkshire pudding is the accompaniment to its mains. And the Fat Badger pub in Harrogate, north Yorkshire, is another excellent option. www.thecarpentersarmsfelixkirk.com/carpenters-arms-home, www.thefatbadgerharrogate.com

British food with funny names! A brief guide

Eton Mess – a gooey delicious dessert of meringue, cream and strawberries, the myth is that the dessert got its name when an elegant meringue dessert was accidentally dropped on the way to an Eton school picnic. It may not be true but it certainly would explain the dish's appearance.

Bubble & Squeak – a classic leftovers dish, this was originally a mix of fried meat and cabbage but now tends to be potato and cabbage. The name refers to the bubbling of the meat in the pot and the squeaks of steam.

Kedgeree – a breakfast favourite of the British upper classes, this mix of basmati rice, smoked haddock, eggs and curry powder is thought to have originated in India, as a rice and bean dish known as Khichri. Brought back to the country by British colonials, it's another dish which makes excellent use of leftovers.

Cullen Skink – it may sound unappealing, but this is a delicious soup of smoked haddock, potatoes and cream, whose name translates as 'essence of Cullen' – the town in Scotland from which the soup originated.

Toad in the Hole – another less-than-delicious-sounding but delicious-in-taste dish, this is a hearty meal of sausages, surrounded by a thick Yorkshire batter pudding. The name supposedly refers to the sausages poking up out of the batter, looking like toads.

Champ – a classic Irish dish, made of mashed potatoes, spring onions and cream, similar to another Irish dish, colcannon, made with kale. Depending on the region of Northern Ireland, champ may also be referred to as 'poundies' or 'howd' with the origins of these names rooted in Ulster-Scots and Gaelic culture.

Potato Bread – Particular to Northern Ireland, this is traditionally a breakfast time staple originally invented to make mashed potatoes last longer by combining them with flour. The dense satisfying texture of potato bread made it a firm favourite, which now makes appearances on menus as an element of starters and main courses.

Stargazy Pie – Stargazy Pie (also known as Starrey Gazey Pie) features pilchards (a type of fish) whose heads poke out of a pastry-based fish pie, appearing to gaze skywards. The legend goes that a brave fisherman, Tom Bawcock, faced stormy seas to attempt to catch

enough fish to feed the village of Mousehole in Cornwall, which faced starvation thanks to inclement weather; he succeeded, and 23 December is still celebrated as ‘Tom Bawcock’s Eve’ in Mousehole – with a huge Stargazy Pie, of course!

Welsh Rarebit – Welsh Rarebit goes a step further towards food heaven than simple cheese on toast by adding eggs, milk, a splash of beer and a dash of mustard, then melting the whole thing under a grill. It went by the name ‘Welsh Rabbit’ on the menus of 18th-century taverns, however it has never featured a rabbit (much like Toad in the Hole contains no toads...) so the reason behind the original name is as much of a mystery as the present one. It’s the Rarebit you’ll find on breakfast, lunch and even dessert menus throughout Wales – and the rest of Britain – today.

Spotted Dick – A steamed pudding made with suet (raw beef/mutton fat) and dried fruit, Spotted Dick can still be found at traditional British ‘caffs’, always teamed with custard. The origins of the name are unknown and a source of amusement and double entendres – ‘spotted’ is easy, because of the currants that dot the dish. ‘Dick’ is slightly more obscure; the word was widely used to mean ‘pudding’ in the 19th century, or it has been suggested that it came from an evolution of the word ‘dough’.

Jam Roly Poly – Another 19th-century steamed suet pudding that was given an unusual name, Jam Roly Poly also goes by the terms ‘shirt sleeve pudding’ and ‘dead man’s arm’. The pastry is rolled flat, spread with jam and then rolled up into a long tube shape; it was given the latter two names thanks to being steamed in an old shirt sleeve in time’s past. Many British people fondly remember Jam Roly Poly from their schooldays, as it was a staple on the school dinner menu, served with – you guessed it! – custard.

Fish and Chips – where to have it

The humble fish and chip supper, which has long been a favourite meal everywhere in Britain, began life as a treat for the working classes in the mid-19th century. The fishing industry boomed during the period, with rapid development of trawler fishing in the North Sea, combined with the creation of railways linking the ports to urban centres. Fried fish became increasingly popular in London and the south east of the country (Charles Dickens mentions a ‘fried fish warehouse’ in *Oliver Twist*, published in 1838), while chips were more of a northern English invention. It remains unclear how the two became combined, but the first fish and chip shop is commemorated with a blue plaque in Oldham’s Tommyfield Market (half an hour outside Manchester), which claims the first chips were fried on the site in 1860.

Originally, the fish and chips would have been fried in beef fat or ‘lard’ (pig fat) but today, vegetable oil is more usual. Best of all, traditional ‘chip shop chips’ are much thicker than American or French fries – meaning they have a lower fat content.

Here is just a small selection of great fish and chippies in Britain.

Simpson’s Fish and Chips, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, south-west England

Winner of the 2016 National Fish and Chip Awards, Simpson’s beat 10,000 fish and chip shops throughout Britain to scoop the prestigious accolade, having come second the previous two years. What makes it so good? The family run business goes further than just being a place to get a fried-food fix, offering a gluten-free frying day once a month and

publishing a children's book to help young people understand more about fish sourcing. Simplicity is key, with nothing fancier than fish, potato and batter making up your meal – though you can get creative with condiments and try Simpson's own Jalapeno Tartare Sauce. www.simpsonsfishandchips.com

Bonnie Gull Seafood Shack, London

Cosy, welcoming and delicious, Bonnie Gull started life as a pop-up restaurant but was so loved that it opened a permanent base in London's Fitzrovia. You can start with oysters, cockles or clams, but when it comes to the main, it has to be the fantastic beer-battered North Sea haddock with beef dripping chips and delicious tartare sauce.

www.bonniegullseafoodshack.com

The Magpie Café, Whitby, north Yorkshire, north England

The Magpie Café, also known as the 'King of the Fish and Chip cafés', has been serving local residents and visitors since the 1940s. Whitby is a beautiful old fishing port situated on the north Yorkshire coast, a little over an hour's drive from the historic city of York, and boasts a maze of narrow streets, alleyways and ruins – and St. Mary's cliff-top churchyard inspired Bram Stoker to write his world-famous book, *Dracula*. www.magpiecafe.co.uk

Adam's Fish and Chip Shop, Isles of Scilly, south-west England

Said to be the most remote fish and chip shop in Britain, Adam's can only be reached by ferry or plane from the mainland, a journey made all the more worthwhile by the freshly caught fish and hand-grown potatoes that are served in the traditional way. You can sit in the cabin to enjoy your supper, or take it out to eat on the decking. There's a vineyard next door; make your evening even more idyllic with a nice bottle of white to accompany the fish and chips. www.adamsfishandchips.co.uk

Stein's Fish and Chips, Padstow, Cornwall, south-west England

TV chef Rick Stein is one of Britain's best-known authorities on fish, and food fans travel across the country to visit his seafood restaurant in the Cornish coastal town of Padstow. He also offers excellent fish and chips, either eat-in or takeaway, from premises on South Quay. In 2009 he opened a second Cornwall-based branch in Falmouth. While Padstow is around 200 miles from London, a four-hour scenic train journey will get you to the nearest station Bodmin Parkway, and it's a 15-minute taxi ride from there. Falmouth can be reached directly from London in five hours. www.rickstein.com/Steins-Fish-and-Chips.html



*Stein's takeaway fish and chips.
Credit VisitBritain/Martin Brent*

Anstruther Fish Bar, Anstruther, Fife, south-east Scotland

Local seafood has always been synonymous with Anstruther and, with a legendary reputation that does not disappoint, this shop sells locally caught fish and has won several awards in recent years and was listed in the UK *Good Food Guide* 2014-15.

www.anstrutherfishbar.co.uk

The Fish & Chip Van: Fisherman's Pier, Tobermory Harbour, Mull, west Scotland

Famous among the yachting community, the fish and chip van is run by friends Jeanette and Jane, who use the freshest daily catch and specialise in king scallops 'seared to order'. Prince Charles visited and proclaimed that the fish and chips were 'delicious' – so they have the royal seal of approval too. <http://tobermoryfishandchipvan.co.uk>

Penaluna, Hirwaun, south Wales

Multiple award winner and finalist in the 2016 National Fish and Chip Awards, Penaluna delights visitors and locals alike with sustainably caught, quality fish, potatoes that have been peeled and chipped that very day and an enthusiasm for their product that's contagious. Hirwaun is just south of the Brecon Beacons National Park and Penaluna is the perfect pitstop for walkers, or visitors to the nearby Penderyn Whisky Distillery.

www.penalunas.co.uk

Enoch's, Llandudno Jct, north Wales

Established in 1969 by a local fish merchant, Enoch's is passionate about sustainable fish, promoting alternatives to cod such as pollack, mackerel and hake, fried in a light and crispy batter using high quality oil. Llandudno is a 60-mile journey from Manchester, and can be reached by car in around 90 minutes. www.enochs.co.uk

Simply Fish and Chips, Belfast and Lisburn, Northern Ireland

Popular and with good reason, Simply Fish and Chips is based in the historic St George's Market in Belfast and has been serving up deliciously fresh fish and chips for more than 15 years. Service is super friendly and you can take away or eat in. Simply recently opened a new branch in Lisburn, a city just south west of Belfast on the way to the beautiful Mountains of Mourne. www.simplyfishandchips.co.uk

The Great British Roast

The wonderful aroma of succulent roasting meat, lashings of tasty gravy and soft, fluffy Yorkshires puddings have been part of British food culture for centuries. A traditional Sunday roast dinner lies at the heart of British cooking, as family and friends come together over this most traditional of British meals.

Yet with an increasing number of Brits now finding they have less time to cook a full roast, eateries from five-star restaurants and hotels to gastropubs, traditional pubs and cafés are all serving up a tempting roast dinner on Sundays and, increasingly, on other days of the week, such is its popularity. No visit to Britain is complete without sampling one, so feast your eyes on some award-winning and interesting twists on Sunday roasts in Britain.

The Spaniards Inn, Hampstead, London

It may be famous for its immortalisation in Charles Dickens' novel *The Pickwick Papers*, its status as one of London's oldest pubs, and where One Direction's Harry Styles celebrated his 20th birthday, but The Spaniards Inn is just as famous for its roasts. Serving up goodies such as roasted, 28-day dry-aged, rib-eye of beef with Yorkshire pudding, or slow-roasted

Yorkshire pork belly with apple sauce, you'll be as charmed by the meals as you will the idyllic setting of this 16th century pub.

www.thespaniardshampstead.co.uk

The Strines Inn, Bradfield, Yorkshire, north England

How large do you want the Yorkshire pudding accompanying your roast dinner? If the answer is 'substantial' head to The Strines Inn in Bradfield, only a half-hour drive from the bustling city of Sheffield (itself just over two hours by train from London) for a pudding of gigantic proportions. The award-winning pub is housed within a 13th-century building and its proximity to the beautiful Peak District National Park means that giant Yorkshire pudding can be easily walked off.

<http://thestrinesinn.webs.com>

The Felin Fach Griffin, Brecon Beacons, south Wales

If you want to stave off the Sunday night blues then it's worth travelling into this beautiful pubs with rooms in Wales – a three-hour drive from London, or an hour from the Welsh capital Cardiff – to sample local delicacies on its Sunday lunch menu, such as braised shoulder of Welsh lamb and mackerel with pancetta. The restaurant offers a 'Sunday Sleepover' package, which includes Sunday lunch, supper, accommodation in one of its seven bedrooms and breakfast on Monday. Eating and resting – the perfect Sunday. www.eatdrinksleep.ltd.uk

The Lion and Lobster, Brighton, south-east England

Some say they offer the best roast in Brighton, high praise for a city teeming with pubs and fantastic places to eat. The Lion and Lobster's roasts are purse-friendly too, priced at £10.95 including your meat – or the delicious homemade nut roast – as well as a colourful selection of veggies. It's perfect for indecisive types, as you can try a mixed roast, with a combination of half and half meats of your choice. Leave space for a sticky toffee pudding or fruit crumble for dessert – it wouldn't be Sunday without them! www.thelionandlobster.co.uk

Merchant Hotel, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Grade A-listed Victorian grandeur and Art Deco-inspired interiors surround diners as they enjoy a roast dinner at the five-star Merchant Hotel located in Belfast's historic Cathedral Quarter. Work up an appetite for dining on Sunday lunch gems such as slow-cooked Lough Erne lamb, fondant potato, new turnips, pea purée with a pre-lunch visit to the hotel's luxury boutique Harper, Northern Ireland's only stockist of Valentino, Celine and Christian Louboutin. Stylish *and* delicious. www.themerchanthotel.com

The Lamplighter, Lake District, north-west England

Bringing the whole family along for Sunday lunch? Head to the Lamplighter in Windermere, in the heart of Lakes country, where its unique take on serving Sunday lunch is to serve it 'family style'. Choose a cut from its menu of Lakeland meats and it will be served whole to



On a Sunday, there's nothing better than a warming roast dinner in a cosy pub – make that on any day!

the table with vegetable accompaniments that diners can carve themselves – everyone gets the cut of meat they want. Fresh and fun. www.lamplighterdiningrooms.com

Blackfriars, Newcastle, north-east England

Feast on roast beef or lamb in the setting of a former Dominican refectory and get a real feel of a medieval monastery while you're tucking into the locally sourced, seasonal produce. While the atmosphere is historic, the food is certainly not – the restaurant was voted as one of the top restaurants in Britain for Sunday lunch by *The Independent* and is included in the Michelin and Harden guides. www.blackfriarsrestaurant.co.uk

The Queen's Arms, Edinburgh, Scotland

The Queen's Arms is a cosy, basement gastropub that provides the ideal atmosphere for Sunday lounging. Nab a comfy booth seat and peruse the menu that's firmly aimed at sharers, though if you want a meal all to yourself, go for the novelty of a 'Roast on a Roll': meat and all the trimmings served on a soft bread roll with gravy. www.queensarmedinburgh.com

The Magic Garden, Battersea, London

Described as 'a boutique festival indoors with all the laughs and none of the mud', the Magic Garden – nestled in south London's affluent Battersea area – serves solid Sunday roast fare including free range corn-fed Suffolk roast chicken, rib-eye roast beef and the not-so-traditional seared sea bass served with a langoustine sauce. Cool yet comfortable, diners can enjoy the sounds of bands and DJs that have toured on the festival circuit while lounging in the eclectically styled garden. www.magicgardenpub.com

The West House, Biddenden, Kent, south-east England

Michelin-star cooking equals Sunday lunch with style; diners visiting the West House – situated in a 15th century weaver's cottage in Kent, around 90 minutes' drive from London – can enjoy inventive Sunday cuisine. Chef Graham Garrett presents an ever-changing menu that has included dishes such as chorizo roast loin, rabbit and squid rilletes and pork shoulder, confit cheek, braised faggot, quince, buttered cabbage,. www.thewesthouserestaurant.co.uk

Roast dinner facts – did you know...?

The French have called the British 'les rosbifs' (roast beefs) since the 18th century, such is the British love of beef!

In 1871 William Kitchener, author of *The Cook's Oracle*, recommended eating 3 kg (6lb) of meat each week as part of a healthy diet!

The method of hanging a large joint of meat on a spit or, in the 19th century suspended from a bottle-jack, required a large fireplace and would be enough to feed a large household not only on the Sunday but in pies and stews throughout the week

The less wealthy would drop off their smaller joints at the bakers to be cooked in the cooling bread ovens – bread was not baked on a Sunday – on their way to church and pick it up on their return.

The first recorded recipe for the accompanying Yorkshire pudding was in 1737 when it was called 'A Dripping Pudding', the dripping coming from spit-roast meat

Forage, fish and source-your-own

More restaurants across Britain offer farm-to-plate menus – where the ingredients used in their dishes can be easily traced to where they were locally produced; it's a sustainable and



Out and about with The Fat Hen in Cornwall

environmentally friendly option. But you can now take it one step further – finding and preparing the food yourself. It allows participants to understand the sights, tastes and smells of our environment. With a steady stream of food-fetching experiences appearing across the destination, from the deepest countryside hedgerows to unlikely urban settings, this 'get back to nature' option is both palatable and educational.

Foraging

Humans once foraged – gathering food from nature – on a regular basis, and the experience is growing in popularity again. There is a huge variety of foraging courses on offer, but it's best to book with an expert, particularly as Britain has intricate laws on land ownership.

Down in Canterbury, Kent in south-east England, around 90 minutes by train from London, wild food experimentalist **Fergus Drennan** leads 12-hour long courses involving searches for edible plants, seaweeds and fungi. Advice on pickling, smoking and salting is also provided, while meals double as cookery demonstrations. <http://fergustheforager.co.uk>

Prestigious cookery school and restaurant **The River Cottage** run a variety of foraging experiences including hedgerow foraging, wild mushroom foraging and seashore foraging. They also organise Wild Food Cookery lessons for those wishing to know how to make the most of their natural larder. Courses take place at River Cottage HQ on the Dorset/Devon border, in south-west England. www.rivercottage.net/cookery-courses/foraging

Take in the beauty of the Brecon Beacons Natural Park while also identifying the delicious ingredients you can source there, with a foraging course led by **Adele Nozedar**, author of several books about foraging. Following a guided walk, you'll be treated to a three-course lunch followed by afternoon tea and cake, as well as a goodie bag full of foodie delights to take home with you. <http://adelenozedar.com>

Gourmet Wild Food Weekends with the **Fat Hen** in Cornwall, south-west England, are run by sustainable-living guru Caroline Davey. Guests enjoy hedgerow cocktails ahead of a Saturday-night candlelit foraged feast. Children-focused courses are also available for families looking to educate their offspring on wild food. The nearest train station is Penzance, around five hours 30 minutes by rail from London. www.fathen.org



Foraging with the Fat Hen shows you the beauty of the Cornish countryside and involves cocktails and a candlelit feast



Learn about edible wild plants with a Taste the Wild foraging course

Specialist foraging

Many foraging courses concentrate on one particular area of interest. Foraging company **Taste the Wild**, for example, runs a Wild Plants for First Aid and Wellbeing course where participants will see more than 30 wild plants, learn their uses and help make some remedies. The course is based near the market town of Boroughbridge in north Yorkshire, north England, half an hour's drive from Leeds and its international airport. www.tastethewild.co.uk

Bushcraft

British adventurer and TV presenter Bear Grylls oversees a Survival Academy that runs demanding bushcraft courses, such as a five-day summer challenge in the Alladale Wilderness Reserve, up in **Scotland's** north-east. Tuition in filtering water, foraging for wild food and installing fishing traps is included before a 36-hour expedition that even Grylls admits "may hurt a little." Good for people looking for an outdoor challenge. The nearest airport is Inverness, a two-hour flight from London, or it's three-and-a-half hours by train from Edinburgh. <http://beargryllssurvivalacademy.com>

Active

Canoes are the mode of transport in **Devonshire** for an energetic trip along the River Dart in search of south-west England's seasonal plants. Later, pick up tips on how to best scoff the shrubs before returning to Totnes, a charming town famous for its stoic resistance to chain shops. www.wildwise.co.uk

Landlubbers may prefer a Wild Food Cycling Day, again courtesy of Fat Hen in **Cornwall**. The 20 miles covered will take you to the seaside and back, and strong thighs are required. www.fathen.org

Fishing and coastal foraging

In southern England, **Dorset's** sandy Studland Bay is a perfect place for kayak fishing, ideal for both beginners and experienced anglers. Participants can opt for a half- or full-day excursion, fishing for bream, bass, mackerel, rays, dogfish in the summer and whiting and plaice in the winter; fishing sessions are managed responsibly and in a sustainable way. The nearest station is Poole, which can be reached in just over two hours by train from London. www.studlandseaschool.co.uk



Cruise along the River Dart and pick up seasonal greens for your supper

Britain's coastlines are bursting with edible goods; you just have to know where to look. Taste the Wild runs two-day coastal courses in Staithes, **Yorkshire**: foragers can find anything from Laver (a type of seaweed) to Velvet swimmer crabs and, if the sea is calm, can pull out lobster pots. Cooking demonstrations are included plus a guide to smoking fish. Staithes is around one hour 20 minutes by car from York. www.tastethewild.co.uk

Lobsters are a highlight on the coast of **north Wales**. Overlooking the beautiful Llandudno Bay, the St George's Hotel can arrange bespoke lobster safaris: two-hour evening trips by potting boat with a qualified marine biologist, followed by culinary tips back at base. Llandudno can be reached in just over two hours by train from Manchester.

www.stgeorgeswales.co.uk/lobster-safari

Over in west Wales, the Pembrokeshire Beach Food Company, who make and sell fantastic products including 'Welshman's Caviar', a seaweed-based condiment, also organise Seashore Picnic and Foraging sessions. Follow the tide out to explore the shoreline and find out which sea plants, seaweeds and shellfish make a tasty snack, then come back for a convivial feast. www.beachfood.co.uk/picnicforage.php

Urban

You don't need to be on the coast or countryside for a spot of foraging; it's also possible in a city environment. In **London, Oxford** and **York**, Robin Harford, creator of one of Britain's leading wild-food websites, Eat Weeds, leads fascinating courses throughout each city that reveal a side usually missed by visitors, and even residents. It's a fantastic alternative way to experience some of Britain's most attractive destinations. www.foragingcourses.com

British classics

Pick-your-own farms are a classic British tradition: large estates where visitors can personally pluck berries, fruits and vegetables – and it's a fun treat for families. In the **Vale of Glamorgan, south Wales** (less than half an hour's drive from Cardiff), Hendrewennol offers all of the above, plus homemade ice cream and a Strawberry Festival every July. www.hendrewennol.com

Cider fans can see how their favourite tippie is made during autumn courses at Upper Neatham Mill Farm, near Alton in **Hampshire**, south England, an easy day-trip from London (just over an hour by train). Advice on how to select, pick and press apples will be forthcoming (<http://upperneatham.co.uk>). If gin is your preference, **Devon's** Bovey Castle, on Dartmoor, provides lessons in making it with local sloe berries. The nearest station is Exeter St Davids, which can be reached in just over two hours from London. www.boveycastle.com

Alcohol-free bars

A combination of factors in recent years has led to the emergence of 'dry bars' in many parts of Britain. 'Dry' here refers to an absence of alcohol: in its place are delicious and healthy 'mocktails', served in a lively bar-setting. So that means socialising and enjoying a good night out, without being impaired with a hangover for the next day's vacationing! Read about the dry bars in Britain drawing in the crowds.

One of the bars that has made waves is **Redemption**, a dry bar that has proved popular with Londoners who fancy catching up with friends or unwinding after a busy day over cocktails that happen to be free of alcohol. Their motto is "spoil yourself without spoiling yourself", and the alcohol-free 'gastrobar' serves twists on the common cocktail, like the 'coco-rita', 'coco-tini' and delicious rum-free mojitos. They have fantastic music nights and a buzzing and friendly vibe. Find Redemption bars in Notting Hill and Shoreditch. www.redemptionbar.com



A beautiful beetotini at Redemption, the dry bar that invites you to 'spoil yourself without spoiling yourself' www.redemptionbar.com

In the north-west England city of Liverpool **The Brink** is a revolutionary bar that took alcohol out of the equation when setting up their 'welcoming, creative and intelligent space'. Cocktails are delicious, inspired by global favours and cost £2.95. It's popular as a place to hang out with friends for leisurely catch-ups or head to before a night out or going to the cinema – or else settle in for an evening's entertainment, as there are regular music, art and performances to soak up. The Brink is a social enterprise, and all profits go into the community to support those who have suffered from alcohol addiction. <http://thebrinkliverpool.com>

For a night out that doesn't feature alcohol, **Sobar** in the city of Nottingham, central England, is a 'creative vibrant space by day and an alternative bar venue by night'. Like The Brink, Sobar is an off-shoot of a charity that helps people in recovery from alcohol and drugs, and many of those employed have been scarred by addiction in the past. The atmosphere is warm, welcoming and tranquil, in stark contrast to many of the rowdier establishments nearby, but hosts poetry, live music and DJ events that draw a variety of people, many young people who want to have fun without the sometimes unsociable effects of alcohol. www.sobar-nottingham.co.uk

5 great mocktails to order in the capital

Andina is a trendy Peruvian restaurant in east London that whips up fantastic and zingy mocktails, with its own juice bar making it a healthy choice for fashionable eaters. <http://andinalondon.com>

Hakkasan has a Michelin star and mocktails worthy of the accolade. Try the strawberry and basil martini for something refreshing, or the Bitter Fortune for a more fragrant option.

<http://hakkasan.com>

The Arch in London has prime position under Marble Arch. A chic contemporary boutique hotel, it offers a 'Virgin Vera' in the bar, a non-alcoholic cocktail that harnesses the power of Aloe Vera to make you feel fantastic. www.thearchlondon.com

TIP! The British are known for their love of Indian and Pakistani cuisine, and cities like Birmingham, Cardiff, Manchester, Glasgow and London have a strong representation of south Asian flavours on their dining out scenes – head to Asha's in Birmingham for some of the best lassi you'll find this side of the subcontinent (the pistachio and rose flavour is divine www.asharestaurants.com/birmingham) or Moksh in Cardiff (where you can even get a mango lassi in lollipop form!) www.moksh.co.uk

Whisky, Scotland's national drink

No visit to Scotland is complete without a visit to a whisky distillery, a drink that is integral to Scottish culture and tradition. According to the Scotch Whisky Association, it was the Scottish tippie of choice as long ago as 1494, when it was recorded in the tax records of the time, the Exchequer Rolls. These days, all visitors can learn about Scotland's famous drink, with distillery tours and tastings dotted around the country.

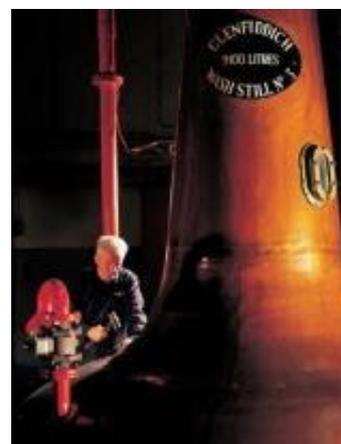
There are five main whisky-producing regions in Scotland, each with their own characteristics.

Highlands

In the north of Scotland, the region of Speyside is home to half of the country's distilleries and produces the two best-selling malt whiskies in the world, the Glenlivet and Glenfiddich. Follow the world's only Whisky Trail that links seven distilleries, including Strathisla, the oldest in the Highlands. All the distilleries offer tours and tastings. www.maltwhiskytrail.com
Getting there: Speyside is around one hour from Inverness airport, which is served by several airlines from London.

Islands

The west coast of Scotland is dotted with islands that all have their own whisky distilleries. Highland Park is made on extraordinary Orkney Island and one of the few remaining distilleries to retain a traditional malting floor, turning each batch of malt by hand. Tours range from the Standard to the Specialist Tour, where you can spend a day working at the distillery: the day starts at 8am and sees participants get completely involved in the whisky-making process, ending with a grand dinner and tutored tasting. <http://highlandpark.co.uk/visit>
Getting there: Daily flights operate between Glasgow and Kirkwall, taking one hour 15 minutes, and the distillery is a short taxi ride away.



Take a tour of the distillery of one of the world's best-selling whiskies - Glenfiddich

Islay

The southernmost of the Inner Hebrides, Islay has eight malt whisky distilleries, most of them close to the island's spectacular shoreline. Whisky from Islay has a distinctive, strong flavour due to the fact the island is composed almost entirely of peat. Laphroaig is one of the best known Islay whiskies and offers a fascinating 'Water to Whisky' experience; spend the day touring the distillery, enjoying a scenic picnic lunch, peat cutting, visiting Laphroaig's water source and finally tasting from a selection of casks and bottling your favourite for yourself. Open to maximum 7 people. Standard distillery tours also operate, lasting one hour. www.laphroaig.com/distillery/visiting.aspx

Getting there: Flights operate daily between Glasgow and Islay and take 45 minutes.

Lowlands

Whisky produced in the four distilleries in the Lowlands – the southern and eastern half of the country – has a much lighter taste, leading to them being known as the 'Lowlands Ladies'. Pay a visit to Auchentoshan, who produce a triple distilled whisky and organise fantastic distillery tours, ranging from the hour-long Classic Tour (which includes a dram to try) to the Ultimate Auchentoshan Experience, with a masterclass in three whiskies and the chance to sample two from the archive. www.auchentoshan.com/the-distillery

Getting there: Auchentoshan is around 20 minutes from Glasgow by car.

Campbeltown

In the 19th century, Campbeltown – tucked away on the southern tip of the Kintyre Peninsula – was the whisky capital of the world, with 37 distilleries. Only three remain, each with a unique history. Springbank is the oldest distillery in Scotland that is still family-owned, with the whisky produced by hand, using traditional methods. Tours and tastings are available, and the distillery produces three different single malts to try. Nearby is the Glengyle Distillery, which was founded in the 1870s by one of the Mitchell brothers, who ran Springbank together until an argument split them up; now back in operation after a long closure – under the Mitchell family once more – Glengyle produces a whisky named Kilkerran. Its 'Work in Progress Number 1' came out in 2009, and the distillery has released several bottles since then. Take a combined tour of Springbank and Glengyle and receive a miniature dram from each to take away. www.springbankwhisky.com, www.kilkerransinglemalt.com/tours

Getting there: Campbeltown is around three hours 30 minutes' drive from Glasgow, or there are daily flights from Glasgow that take 45 minutes.

Whisky plus...

With those five distinctive whisky producing regions in Scotland, any trip to the destination will present a distillery tour wherever you travel. Building on the huge popularity of its national drink, Scotland's distilleries are now offering unique supplements to whisky tastings, to boost further interest in the drink.

Good for...foodies

It has become increasingly popular to twin whisky with certain foods. Dalwhinnie Distillery, located within the Cairngorms National Park in the Scottish Highlands (around a two-hour drive from Glasgow or Edinburgh), carefully pairs its classic single malts with specially



Discover the tempting combination of whisky and chocolate at the Dalwhinnie Distillery

chosen luxury chocolates handmade in the Highlands. www.discovering-distilleries.com/dalwhinnie)

Pairing whisky with food is not the preserve of distilleries. Edinburgh restaurant The Whiski Rooms offers a whisky and cheese tasting, while if you head to fellow Edinburgh hotspot The Amber Restaurant, you can feast on Scottish tapas – smoked salmon and oatcakes, smoked venison and wood pigeon pâté – paired with Scottish whiskies. www.whiskirooms.co.uk, www.scotchwhiskyexperience.co.uk/restaurant

Good for...unique experiences

You can make your own whisky at Glengoyne Distillery – just 14 miles from Glasgow – on a Malt Master Tour. Start with a dram of the Glengoyne 12 Year Old, continue with an in-depth tour of the distillery and then head to the Sample Room. You'll feel like an inventor as you sit before an array of test tubes and jugs of 'golden nectar' in varying colours; blend your signature mixture and take home a 200ml bottle of cask strength whisky. The Malt Master Tour takes one hour 45 minutes; the longer Masterclass – five hours – includes a scent test of 20 aromas that go into various whiskies, as well as a light lunch. www.glengoyne.com

One of Scotland's oldest distilleries (established in 1775), the Famous Grouse Experience at The Glenturret Distillery in Crieff, central Scotland allows customers to not only bottle their own whisky, but to personalise their bottle of The Famous Grouse blended whisky on site. www.thefamousgrouse.com

And what's a whisky tour without a ride in a whisky barrel! At the Scotch Whisky Experience tour in Edinburgh, visitors embark on a bubbling barrel ride through a replica distillery, designed to immerse you in the whisky-making process. The attraction has recently undergone a substantial renovation, and visitors can now also experience an exhibition recapping the production process, plus use hi-tech touch screens with information in 20 languages. www.scotchwhiskyexperience.co.uk



You should find at least one whisky you like out of the 400 on offer at SCOTCH at The Balmoral

Good for...whisky connoisseurs

Rocco Forte's The Balmoral is home to the SCOTCH signature whisky bar, featuring the largest collection of purely Scottish whiskies available to the general public in Edinburgh. Guests can sample an impressive collection of 500 whiskies from Scotland's traditional whisky regions in a variety of blends, malts and vintages dating back to 1940. SCOTCH's collection of exclusively Scottish whisky is overseen by three highly trained Whisky Ambassadors who are on hand to offer guests advice when selecting a dram. www.roccofortehotels.com/hotels-and-resorts/the-balmoral-hotel/restaurants-and-bars/scotch

One luxurious way to enhance your knowledge and interest in the 'water of life' is to embark on a Classic Whisky

Journey on board the luxurious Belmond Royal Scotsman train. Guests receive an insight into the world of Scotch, plus tastings, and travel through the heart of the Speyside whisky region. www.belmond.com/royal-scotsman-train

More information at www.visitscotland.com/about/food-drink/whisky

It's not just Scotland that produces whisky!

In south Wales, the splendid Penderyn Distillery produces award-winning single malts, with tours and tastings available to visitors. It also makes the lovely Brecon Gin, seen in pubs and bars across the UK. www.welsh-whisky.co.uk

In Northern Ireland, Bushmills is the oldest whisky distillery, with tours of the mixing rooms and distillery, located right by the spectacular County Antrim coast and World Heritage site, the Giant's Causeway. www.bushmills.com

Say cheers to English and Welsh wine!

Would you be surprised to learn that wine production has been part of English and Welsh history for nearly 2,000 years? Vines have been growing here ever since the Romans introduced them to the countryside and, by the time of the Domesday Book – the great survey of the country taken in 1086 – there were around 40 vineyards still operating. Over recent decades many vineyards have opened up for business, particularly in the south-east of England, where the chalky soils are similar to that of France's Champagne region.



English and Welsh vineyards are yielding plenty of excellent grapes that are being turned into award-winning wines

English and Welsh wines regularly make the wine lists at restaurants, and wine produced at Chapel Down vineyards in Kent, south-east England, was reportedly served at the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's wedding! They've also caught the eye of luxury stockists, such as Fortnum & Mason – here you'll find wines from the Ancre Hill vineyard in Monmouth (on the Wales/England borders) on the shelves. This is down to the fact that, year on year, English and Welsh wines are scooping awards from international wine and spirit boards, garnering a solid reputation in the wine world. Why not get right into the heart and spirit of English and Welsh wines by visiting one of the 400-plus vineyards dotted around England and Wales; some offer onsite accommodation, so you can enjoy the full flavours of the grape and leave the driving for another day.

Ten vineyard experiences

Denbies, Surrey, south-east England

Celebrating 30 years in the business in 2016, Denbies is one of England's best-known wine producers. They won the country's first gold medal for an English rosé wine and an international gold for the Denbies Noble Harvest dessert wine. Take an outdoor vineyard train tour or, better still, a sparkling train tour with a glass of specially selected Denbies Award winning Sparkling Cuvee. For those who would like something a little more hands-on, Denbies offer a 'Vine and Dine' experience where you spend the day grape-picking, tasting

wine and having lunch. Leave with a Denbies Estate Grown Vine to take away.

www.denbies.co.uk

Ridgeview, Sussex, south-east England

Producer of award-winning sparkling wines, Ridgeview's Marksman 2009 beat off entries from 50 other countries to win the Gold Medal in the International Wine Challenge in 2012. The Queen served bottles of Ridgeview's Grosvenor sparkling wine to guests at her 80th birthday celebration and its sparkling rosé, Fitzrovia, to Barack Obama during a state visit. The vines were first planted on the lush South Downs in 1994, where the chalky soil has helped create world-class white and rose sparkling wines. Regular tours can be booked online, or look out for feature tours, which involve extras such as food pairings and the opportunity to taste rare vintages from the archives. Ridgeview is around 90-minutes' drive south of London, and a short drive from Brighton. Hassocks train station is a ten-minute taxi ride, and trains take around one hour from London Victoria. www.ridgeview.co.uk

Glyndwr Vineyard, Cowbridge, south Wales

The oldest established vineyard in Wales, Glyndwr has been making acclaimed wines since 1982, encompassing fruity wines, a vintage sparkling wine and an oak aged red. Vineyard tours are relaxed and interesting, kicking off with a glass of Welsh vintage sparkling wine and finishing with a country platter of delightful dishes made from local produce via two more glasses of Glyndwr wines. Look out for the resident llamas along the way! Self-catering cottages offer countryside escapes for anyone wishing to imbibe to their heart's content and then have a luscious nap. The vineyard is less than half an hour's drive from Cardiff.

www.glyndwrvineyard.co.uk

Ryedale, Yorkshire, northern England

While many vineyards are based in the south and east of England (the soil and climate make ideal vine-growing conditions), England's most northerly vineyard is found up in the beautiful county of Yorkshire. The Ryedale Vineyard is located just a half-hour drive from the ancient city of York and offers bed and breakfast accommodation in its Grade II-listed farmhouse, which dates back to around 1630. The vineyard regularly holds events that pair its wines with Yorkshire cheeses so guests can get a real taste of the fantastic produce available locally. www.ryedalevineyard.co.uk

Camel Valley, Cornwall, south-west England

Enjoy the tours and tastings at the Camel Valley Vineyard in Cornwall while staying at one of the vineyard's two stone-built barn conversion holiday cottages, one of which overlooks the vines. And, if you fancy a spot of fishing on a break from drinking the award-winning wines, the vineyard has its own private stretch of the Camel River where you can try your hand at catching salmon and sea trout. Camel Valley is around a 90-minute drive from the international airport of Exeter, Devon. www.camelvalley.com

Llanerch Vineyard, south Wales

For a real gourmet treat, why not intersperse brushing up on your wine-tasting skills with your cooking skills! Llanerch Vineyard in south Wales, 20 minutes' drive from Cardiff, is also home to the Angela Gray Cookery School, where courses as diverse as Indian cuisine,

seasonal vegetables or bread baking are available. Dine on your creations and then try out some of the 22 award-winning Cariad wines at the vineyard. And there's no need to leave straight after; stay over in one of its farmhouse rooms, spacious studios or self-catering cottages. <http://llanerch-vineyard.co.uk>

West Street Vineyard, Essex, east England

West Street Vineyard is a relative newcomer to the scene but has wowed visitors and wine experts alike with delicious wines from Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes. Fantastic food is served at its contemporary restaurant where you can enjoy brunch, lunch, dinner and afternoon tea with a glass of English fizz. The on-site Wine School has great classes on wines from all over the world, and it is possible to taste the vineyard's wines throughout the year and, in summer, take vineyard walking tours (available to groups of four or more). West Street is near Colchester, just over an hour from London by car.

www.weststreetvineyard.co.uk

Three Choirs, Gloucestershire, south-west England

One of England's leading single estate vineyards, Three Choirs has 75 acres of beautiful vineyards, with a nature trail and audio posts giving information as to the different types of grapes. There are daily, free group tours and tastings are always available. The vineyard also has an excellent restaurant and 11 comfortable rooms if you want to make a night of it. Newent is close to the England/Wales border, around 90 minutes' drive from Cardiff and three hours from London. www.three-choirs-vineyards.co.uk

Chapel Down, Kent, south-east England

Kent has always been known as the Garden of England and the chalky soil makes it perfect for growing plump, juicy Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes. Chapel Down's wines have won several awards and the vineyard offers guided tours of the working winery, along with the chance to stroll through the 22 acres of vineyards. Tastings can also be arranged and take place in the elegant winery building, made by local craftsmen from materials used in the wine-making process. Tenterden is around 90 minutes' drive south east of London, and around 20 minutes' drive from the Eurotunnel terminal at Ashford. www.chapeldown.com

Carr-Taylor, Hastings, Sussex, south-east England

Winner of 130 awards since it began planting vines in 1971, Carr-Taylor now produces crisp and aromatic white wines and sparkling wines akin to Champagne. Turn up and take a self-guided tour, or get the inside info on a tutored tour and tasting. Hastings is under two hours from London by car, or can be reached in around 90 minutes by train. www.carr-taylor.co.uk

Annual wine celebration

English Wine Week runs annually at the end of May/beginning of June, enabling wine drinkers to get even more out of their passion for English wines as they are celebrated with a packed programme of events. See www.englishwineweek.co.uk for more information.

10 ways to enjoy a British craft beer

Britain's range of artisan beers, made by small, independent brewers, is fast expanding. From pilseners and porters to pale ales and stouts – made with unusual hop varieties using innovative techniques – pubs and bars are serving up a much wider range of flavours than traditional lagers and bitters. There are plenty of ways to enjoy the craft beer experience.



*Make your very own pint at the London Fields Brewery or the Drygate in Glasgow.
Image credit Andre Titcombe*

DIY Craft Brewing in London and Glasgow

One for the true beer fan, these day-long courses are run on the first Saturday of every month at **London Fields Brewery** in Hackney, east London. During seven hours of hands-on instruction, a master brewer will guide you through the hop-to-bottle process – and tastings of the brewery's classic ales. You can also do Beer Pairing, tasting delicious craft beers alongside beer-infused classics like 'Voodoo Nachos' and a 'Love Not War Pulled Pork Bun'. www.londonfieldsbrewery.co.uk

Drygate in Glasgow, Scotland, is Britain's first 'experiential craft brewery', operating from a previously a derelict 1960s box factory. There's an award-winning vintage bar and kitchen you can spy through a panoramic glass wall. The Drygate Studio Kit specialist beer-making equipment enables visitors to brew their own beer, and even bottle and package it to create their very own brand! Or you can sit back and sip ready-made craft beers, and feast on delicious charcuterie. Tours of Drygate run on Sundays and include a tutored tasting with a bottle master. <http://drygate.com>

Aladdin's cave of craft beer, Brighton, south-east England

Located just a pebble's throw away from Brighton beach, Bison Beer is a craft beer treasure trove, with at least 365 beers – one for every beer-drinking day of the year. You can find old favourites and try something new from all over the world, with staff as passionate about craft beer as you can get. Bison believe there's a 'beer for every occasion' and have a shop iPad to help customers match dinner to each beer! <http://bisonbeer.co.uk>

Art meets liquid refreshment, Leeds, north England

Prefer a spot of painting with your pint rather than a pork pie? Make your way to BrewDog's Leeds bar for Scribbles and Schooners where, on the last Thursday of every month, you can draw to your heart's content and take part in competitions to illustrate the weirdest and wackiest things. Visitors can wash the entertainment down with an impressive range of BrewDog's favourite draughts and guest craft beers. www.brewdog.com

Take on the beer mile, Bermondsey, London

It all began with The Kernel, a brewery that opened in Bermondsey in 2009, leading to the neighbourhood just next to London Bridge attracting more brewers and a bottle shop, as well as thirsty beer-lovers in search of expertly crafted small-batch pints. Start at Southwark Brewing Company for a choice between at least six hand-pulled cask beers; next head to Anspach & Hobday for The Porter, which won a Gold award in 2014; then stock up at The

Bottle Shop for beers to take home and have another at Brew By Numbers. Next up is The Kernel, which is only open on Saturdays as a shop, not as a bar. The beer mile continues beyond with Partizan Brewing and the Fourpure Brewing Company. Most Taprooms are open Fridays and/or Saturdays, with some also open on Sunday (check individual websites). Cheers!

www.southwarkbrewing.co.uk, <http://anspachandhobday.com>, www.bottle-shop.co.uk, www.brewbynumbers.com, www.thekernelbrewery.com, www.partizanbrewing.co.uk, www.fourpure.com, www.eebria.com

Beer-battered fish and chips, Shropshire, west England

Three Tuns Brewery, established in 1642, claims to be the oldest in England; set in the picturesque small market town of Bishops' Castle, a two-hour journey from Birmingham, it sticks to a small range of traditional artisan beers, from Cleric's Cure IPA to the XXX, made to a family recipe passed down the generations. Try them an alternative way at sister pub, The Three Tuns Inn, by tucking into a plate of Three Tuns XXX beer-battered fish and chips. www.thethreetunsinn.co.uk, www.threetunsbrewery.co.uk

Around the world in 70+ beers, Newcastle, north-east England

The Bottle Shop Bar and Kitchen describes itself as a 'craft beer emporium' and stocks more than 70 bottled beers ranging from Sweden to California, as well as great British flavours; there are also 12 draught beers on tap. Craft beer lovers will find more than enough to satisfy, while anyone with a hunger for a scotch egg won't be disappointed with the delightful bar snacks on offer. Regular comedy nights and live bands make this one of the city's buzzing nightspots www.bottleshopbars.com

Beer & Books, Cornwall, south-west England

A five-hour train ride from London, the historic maritime town of Falmouth is fast becoming a foodie – and beer – hotspot! HAND speciality beer bar is set, appropriately, in an old brewery yard and offers a range of more than 80 craft beers and hosts mini beer festivals. Also in town is Beerwolf Books. Part-bookshop, part-pub it always has a choice of six craft ales on draught. www.facebook.com/HandBeerBarUK, www.beerwolfbooks.com

Beer & Burgers, Cardiff, south Wales

Two hours' west of London by train brings you to the Welsh capital, and Wales' first specialist craft beer and cider bar. The Urban Tap House was opened by the people behind Tiny Rebel brewery and offers a range of regularly changing guest ales from all over Britain alongside a menu of gourmet burgers. www.urbantaphouse.co.uk

Gluten free beers, The Grove Inn, Yorkshire, north England

For a winning range of national and international craft beers in an unpretentious setting – including many specially chosen gluten-free beers – this traditional pub in the historic Yorkshire mill town of Huddersfield, around three hours north of London by train, fits the bill. A choice of more than 200 craft beers are in stock at any time as well as cask and keg ales. www.groveinn.co.uk

Beer Club, Belfast, Northern Ireland

In the Northern Irish capital, the Beer Club organises monthly craft beer tastings at the Hudson Bar, sometimes on a flavour theme such as sour beers, sometimes on a paired food theme, such as beer and cheese. Tastings are global in scope but there's usually a British beer or two in the mix and the Hudson itself has lager-like Yardsman from newbie local craft brewery, Hercules, on draught. www.facebook.com/belfast.beerclub.7

Great British Craft Beer Festivals

London Craft Beer Festival

More than 100 artisan beers from across Britain and Europe, plus paired food and music all under one roof. www.londoncraftbeerfestival.co.uk

Belfast Beer and Cider Festival

Temporarily the biggest bar in Northern Ireland, with more than 100 beers. Also tutored tastings and live music. www.belfastbeerfestival.co.uk

Craft100

Most British beer festivals include at least some continental or American beers in their line-up but not this one. If it's British craft beers you're after, you'll find 100 of them here. www.craft100.co.uk

Craft Beer Rising

Possibly the coolest beer festival on British shores, this one is based at the old Truman Brewery in east London and covers 200 beers plus street food and live music. <http://craftbeerrising.co.uk>

Liverpool Craft Beer Expo

One of the hippest beer festivals in the country, Liverpool Craft Beer Expo takes place at Camp & Furnace, a creative, industrial-style event space. Street food and music are part of the draw but it's the chance to try a line-up of more than 250 craft beers, 50 ales and 40 ciders that's the centre of attraction here. www.liverpoolcraftbeerexpo.com



Liverpool Craft Beer Expo is the ideal time to expand your knowledge of British bevies

Micro-distilled marvels

There are a number of artisan, micro-distilled spirits you can sample on your visit to Britain; a recent resurgence in boutique, small-batch distilling has seen a boom in new flavours and innovative ingredients, embracing the tastes of the British landscape.

Scotland

Gin is experiencing a stylish renaissance and in the Scottish capital of Edinburgh, the trend has really taken off. Sample delicious elderflower or raspberry Edinburgh Gin, distilled with Scottish botanicals including heather and milk thistle and infused with local berries, in Edinburgh Gin's own bar at their central Edinburgh distillery.

www.edinburghgindistillery.co.uk



Edinburgh gin now comes infused with local berries

For a taste of the Highlands, Caorunn gin mixes traditional Celtic botanicals – including rowan berry, dandelion leaf, bog myrtle and heather (www.caorunngin.com). Try it at One Square in Edinburgh: with gin tastings and more than 50 varieties behind the bar, it's a gin education. One Square have also produced their own small batch of gin, such fans of the tippie are they; it's infused with Mediterranean liquorice, orris root, juniper and fragrant Scottish Heather. www.onesquareedinburgh.co.uk



Highland marvel – Caorunn gin

Botanist Gin hails from the island of Islay, a 45-minute flight from Glasgow. Incorporating 22 wild herbs and flowers foraged by local experts, the spirit is slowly distilled in the world's only active Lomond pot-still – usually used for whisky (www.bruichladdich.com/the-botanist-islay-dry-gin). Relax with a G&T at nearby Katie's Bar, known for its seasonal produce. www.bridgend-hotel.com/katies-bar

Eden Mill concocts beers, whiskies and – best of all – gin at its St Andrews site, where the legendary Haig family first made their whisky more than 200 years ago. Few distilleries are as original in their approach to botanicals and flavourings for their gin; Golf Gin is flavoured with retired clubs from local courses. Love Gin is a bestseller, tinged pink by red rose petals, marshmallow root, goji berries and hibiscus flowers; Hop Gin is pale green and earthily infused with hops; and Original Gin is flavoured with local seabuckthorn (www.edenmill.com). Taste it on site as part of a tour, or have an 'Eden Love' at Glasgow nightspot Wild Cabaret. www.wildcabaret.com

Micro-distilled whiskies are rare, due to legal limits on minimum still size and the time it takes to mature. Abhainn Dearg distillery in the Outer Hebrides (an hour's flight from Glasgow) is one of the newest – and furthest west – in Scotland. Their single malt the Spirit of Lewis is based on an ancient recipe, distilled with the island's mineral-rich mountain water. www.abhainndearg.co.uk

A gin that has a lot in common with whisky, Firkin Gin is aged in American oak whisky casks and is the same colour as the spirit Scotland's more traditionally known for; it's made in small batches at Gleann Mór in Dunbar on the south-east coast of Scotland

(<http://firkingin.co.uk>). Try it at Gin 71 in Glasgow, a dream destination for fans of gin. www.gin71.com

England

Local juniper goes into one of England's newest gins, The Lakes Gin. It's made right next to the picturesque Bassenthwaite Lake, where barns have become a mash house and still house, and cattle sheds have been transformed into the shop, bistro and bar. As well as gin, vodka and the first-ever British Isles blended whisky are on the menu at The Lakes Distillery (www.lakesdistillery.com). Try them at The Trout Hotel's swanky lounge bar with tonic, or even neat – it's that smooth. www.trouthotel.co.uk

Sipsmith was the first distillery of its kind to open in London since 1820, and its several gins have been garnering awards and accolades ever since. As well as a London Dry Gin and V.J.O.P (A Very Junipery Over Proof gin), the Damson and Sloe Gins tend to fly off the shelves at drinks shops and supermarkets all over Britain (www.sipsmith.com). Try the warming Sloe Gin at specialist gin cocktail bar Pleased To Meet You in Newcastle, north-east England. www.ptmy-newcastle.co.uk

Bath Gin, made in the south-west English city's 'micro distillery and botanicals laboratory' features a cheekily-winking Jane Austen on its label, and offers "gin of a different Persuasion" (referencing one of Austen's famous novels). Try it on site at The Canary Gin Bar, where you can drink a Mr Darcy or Lizzy B cocktail. www.thebathgincompany.co.uk

BLOOM is made by the first female master distiller, Joanne Moore, who was inspired by the floral perfumes of an English country garden and natural wildflower meadows to make the deliciously fragrant spirit; it combines honeysuckle, chamomile and pomelo (www.bloomgin.com). Taste it at The Feathers Hotel in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, home to more than 380 gins from around the world. www.feathers.co.uk

Made in the heart of east London – once notorious for its Victorian gin palaces – Hoxton Gin offers a contemporary spin on the traditional tippie, with a distinctive medley of tropical flavours, including grapefruit and coconut (www.hoxtongin.com). Enjoy at hip east London favourite The Hoxton Pony. www.thehoxtonpony.com

North London micro-distillery Sacred Gin is known for its exotic botanicals such as frankincense, and spicy flavours including cardamom gin (www.sacredspiritscompany.com). Sip a martini using Sacred at Dukes in Mayfair, central London – favourite watering hole of Bond author Ian Fleming. www.dukeshotel.com

Chilgrove Gin eschews fashionable botanicals and is made with grapes rather than traditional grain, resulting in a refined finish (www.chilgrovegin.com). Named after the Sussex hamlet a two-hour drive from London, near Goodwood racing course, try a Chilgrove Martini at local The White Horse Pub and Inn for a taste of the English countryside. www.thewhitehorse.co.uk

The Cambridge Distillery is the world's first 'gin tailor', famed for creating bespoke spirits in an array of innovative flavours (www.cambridgedistillery.co.uk). Sample at Michelin-starred



Chilgrove Gin – made with grapes in Sussex

restaurant Alimentum in Cambridge, an hour's train ride from London, where the distillery created an exciting truffle and Lady Grey gin. www.restaurantalimentum.co.uk

Chase Distillery is known for the quintessentially British flavours of its hand-made spirits, such as rhubarb vodka, made with fresh, local fruit (www.chasedistillery.co.uk). Enjoy at the Chase family's Verzon House Hotel, a stone's throw from the distillery in Herefordshire (near the border of England and Wales), where all produce is sourced within a 30-mile radius. www.verzonhouse.com

Black Cow Vodka is the world's first pure milk vodka, made in rural Dorset by dairy farmer Jason Barber (www.blackcow.co.uk). Dorset chef and foody investor Mark Hix has championed the tippie; sample the smooth, creamy vodka in a Dirty Cow Martini at Mark's Bar in London's Soho. www.marksbar.co.uk

Wales



Welsh distillery Dà Mhile's seaweed gin is distilled with 16 botanicals to complement seafood, including dill, oregano and parsley, before being infused with local seaweed for three weeks, which adds flavour and salinity, and its greeny-yellow hue (www.damhile.co.uk). Sample at the Ginhaus Deli in Llandeilo, just over an hour's drive from Cardiff. www.ginhaus.co.uk

Try Dà Mhile's seaweed gin with seafood and you'll never look back!

Penderyn Distillery in south Wales, an hour's drive from Cardiff, is renowned for its award-winning single malt whisky. Located in the spectacular foothills of the Brecon Becons, the natural landscape provides the spirit's distinctive taste, distilled with world famous Brecon water (www.welsh-whisky.co.uk). Try a glass at celebrated Welsh poet Dylan Thomas' preferred watering hole, the Browns Hotel, in nearby town Laugharne. www.browns-hotel.co.uk

Northern Ireland

Shortcross Gin's distinctive floral aroma is reminiscent of summer meadows thanks to its hand-foraged local botanicals, including elderberries and wild clover. Distilled with water from the Boyd's family well, the gin is hand bottled by the family too. Shortcross is the first craft gin distillery to open in Northern Ireland in County Down, a 45 minute drive from Belfast (www.shortcrossgin.com). Try it at Ox Restaurant in Belfast, which has a dedicated gin menu. www.oxbelfast.com

Specialist drink emporiums in Britain

Whether you want to buy a British beverage to take home as a gift or just pick a new tippie to try while on your trip, there are shops, and then there are *shops* in which to do such things.

Hedonism Wines in the heart of Mayfair, in London, is a bit like a temple to wine. With 5,500 wines and 2,000 spirits gracing the shelves and lining the walls, you should find what you're looking for – whether you want to spend under £30 or are prepared to dispense with more than £3,000. You can try wines from the shop's 'Enomatic' machines – choosing between 45 to taste at any one time – and kids are even welcomed into a play area while you nose, taste, and choose your bottle. <http://hedonism.co.uk>



Hedonism Wines in London is a temple to all things viticultural

Berry Bros & Rudd are wine and spirit merchants, not just to anyone but the Royal Household – so the store in central London's St James's Street holds two Royal Warrants declaring they supply to The Queen and Prince Charles. The store is Britain's oldest wine and spirit merchant, and began trading in 1698. As well as a fantastic selection and good old fashioned service, you can also attend Wine School in the store's Pickering Cellar, with one day and evening courses for those who wish to absorb more of the Berry Bros & Rudd team's vast viticultural knowledge. www.bbr.com

With an Enomatic machine that dispenses samples and high end wines by the glass, fine wines unearthed from private cellars, rare ports and more than 350 malt whiskies, the **Cambridge Wine Merchant** is one of the best places in the country to buy drinks; indeed it has been voted number one independent drinks retailer three times. As well as plenty to buy and take away with you, the store has an in-house bar where you can enjoy a glass of wine or sample the specialist spirit of the moment, with views of historic King's College Chapel. www.cambridgewine.com

If it's organic and biodynamic wine you're after, head to **Wright's Food Emporium** in Carmarthenshire, west Wales, which is located just a stone's throw from the National Botanic Garden of Wales. A large section of the food-lovers' haven is devoted to wine, with refillable wine and Welsh cider available in case you're on a self-catering or camping trip and wish to enjoy some of the favoured local tipples! There's also a huge selection of craft beer from Britain and across the world. www.wrightsfood.co.uk/shop

Many department stores have fantastic selections of alcoholic drinks, and one such is London's **Selfridges**, where you can try before you buy in the intimate section devoted to wines and spirits from the world over. Another, in north-east England's Newcastle, is

Fenwick, located in the city centre. You'll find a selection of gins, many of them local – try Jack's, from Northumberland, which is marvellously fragrant – as well as local beers and ales sold by the bottle. www.selfridges.com, www.fenwick.co.uk

Over in the north-west England city of Manchester is **Beermoth**, located in the buzzing Northern Quarter. As well as stocking one of the largest ranges of national and international craft beers in the country, expert staff can advise you on food pairings. A bar, Café Beermoth, has recently opened, giving you the chance to sample beers (all in the name of research), and there are also talks and tutored tastings held twice a week. www.beermoth.co.uk

Ship in a Bottle in north-west England's Liverpool was the offshoot of the Ship & Mitre, one of the city's most famous pubs – so many people ordered take-away bottles from its extensive range that they decided to set up shop. It's an ale-lover's paradise, and sells more than 400 products, which are mostly beers. Both the Ship-shop and the original pub version would be a good place for a British beer initiate to find out more about it, and to buy those back home a taste of your trip. <http://theshipinabottle.co.uk>

Also in Liverpool – and also connected to a 'watering hole' (a British term for a bar or pub!) is **Whisky Business**, downstairs from Jenny's Bar on what is often described as the city's own Diagon Alley. As the name implies, a towering wall of whisky greets you when you enter, as well as the sounds of Motown drifting through the speakers, but you can also buy Liverpool gin and local craft beers aplenty. Regular whisky tasting events take place too. Follow on Twitter [@LplWhisky](https://twitter.com/LplWhisky)

Inverarity 121 in Glasgow's happening West End is the place to go for buying a bottle, having a taste and talking about all matters alcohol with the experts who run the shop. Wine is the main focus here, but there is a good selection of interesting spirits and even cigars on sale too. The shop's owners are what makes it what it is – like 'wine doctors', you can go in and give them either a specific or quite vague idea of what you're after, and they'll find you a bottle to match your mood and budget. There are regular themed wine tastings too. www.inverarity121.com

When it comes to whisky, Edinburgh's Royal Mile is home to several enticing stores to purchase a bottle or two. Try **Cadenhead's**, a whisky shop and home of Scotland's oldest independent bottler, established in 1842; your whisky comes straight from the cask, never chill-filtered or chemically altered so you can rest assured quality in the very highest. Expert staff guide you through the selection, and tastings are held in the store. Also in the Scottish capital, **The Scotch Whisky Experience** is where you can stand surrounded by the largest whisky collection on the planet; head to the shop for nearly 500 whisky bottlings to choose from, the widest selection of Scotch whiskies available in the city. www.wmcadenhead.com, www.scotchwhiskyexperience.co.uk/shop

Food and Drink Festival Calendar

Britain is a nation of food lovers and festival lovers. What happens when these two passions meet? Some of the most fun, tasty and interesting weekends of the year. The following is a selection of the hundreds of annual food festivals on offer around Britain.

Foodies Festivals

There are numerous Foodies Festivals taking place over the summer in locations across Britain: London – Blackheath (8 – 10 July), Bristol, west England (13 – 15 May), Tatton Park, Cheshire, north-west England (15 – 17 July), Edinburgh (5 – 7 August), London – Alexandra Palace (27 – 29 August) and Oxford, south-east England (2 – 4 September). There are numerous tasting and sampling sessions, restaurant tents, cooking for kids' theatre, world food pagodas, produce markets and also entertainment.

<http://foodiesfestival.com>

England

English Wine Week (28 May – 5 June)

Taking place around England, this is a celebration of English wines, with vineyard visits, events, plenty of tastings and food-pairing sessions, plus chances to meet the producers of English wine, which is growing in reputation in the wine world. www.englishwineweek.co.uk

Taste of London Festival, London (15 – 19 June)

Fine dining is transported to Regent's Park for four days of summer eating, drinking and entertainment. The city's best restaurants dish up their finest in an unbeatable alfresco gourmet feast, while hundreds of producers provide a bounty of the best food and beverages. www.tastefestivals.com/london

Great British Beer Festival, London (9 – 13 August)

Held in Kensington Olympia, this is a must for beer lovers. There are more than 800 cask and bottled real ales, ciders and foreign beers to taste at 'Britain's Biggest Pub'. There is also plenty of food to soak it all up. <http://gbbf.org.uk>

Isle of Wight Garlic Festival, south England (20 – 21 August)

A homage to the stinking rose. Not just garlic, but all sorts of edible delights feature at this undercover festival, along with quirky bands, a zoo, classic cars and 'a few wandering celebrities'. www.garlic-festival.co.uk

Jamie Oliver's Big Feastival, Cotswolds, south-central England (26 – 28 August)

The famous chef not only brings you dozens of affordable and high-quality restaurants around Britain, he's now putting on a party to go with it for the second year running! The Big Feastival takes place in the Cotswolds area of England, a beautiful and quintessentially British part of the countryside, at the farm of former bassist of hit band Blur, Alex James. Pop-up restaurants, family fun and live music make this a food and fun-lovers treat.

www.jamieoliver.com/thebigfeastival

Brighton & Hove Food and Drink Festival, south-east England (Dates TBC)

Now in its 12th year, this is the largest festival of its kind, running for ten days, three times a year (the first festival runs in May, there's one in August/September and another in December). With local producers, growers, restaurants, bars and food retailers firmly at its heart, it's a showcase of the fantastic food, drink and hospitality to be found in the city and the surrounding county of Sussex. It includes the Big Sussex Market, the largest free food event in the south of England, the Live Food Show, supper clubs and gala dinners. www.brightonfoodfestival.com

Ludlow Food Festival, west England (9 – 11 September)

One of the most important in the calendar, the historic little town of Ludlow, near the border of Wales, has been hosting a food festival every year since 1995. It has a strong reputation as one of the best, and remains true to its original spirit of showcasing excellent local produce and suppliers. What you will find is 'an abundance of real food and drink – from rare breeds of meat to real ale, cider and perry, produced and sold by people who really care about what they are doing.' Great atmosphere and a haven for anyone passionate about food. www.foodfestival.co.uk; www.ludlowspringfestival.co.uk

Melton Mowbray Food Festival, central England (1 – 2 October)

One of Britain's largest regional food festivals, formerly known as the East Midland Food Festival, is held in Melton Mowbray, the 'Rural Capital of Food', around an hour's drive from Birmingham. Besides locally produced Pork Pies and Stilton Cheese, the festival has more than 200 exhibitors featuring the best the East Midlands has to offer. Demonstrations and children's activities make it a good for both foodies and families. <http://meltonmowbrayfoodfestival.co.uk>

Scotland

The Royal Highland Show, Ingliston, Edinburgh (23 – 26 June)

The Royal Highland Show is a celebration of Scottish farming, food and rural life. Fabulous food and drink are one of the highlights of the show, attracting foodies from near and far. More than 100 Scottish food and drink exhibitors attend alongside gourmet suppliers from across Britain. There are also cookery demonstrations and produce competitions with plenty of opportunities to sample along the way. www.royalhighlandshow.org

The Scottish Real Ale Festival, Edinburgh (7 – 9 July)

The annual celebration of Scottish ale where thousands gather to taste a wide selection of beers from approximately 30 Scottish breweries. www.sraf.camra.org.uk

The Golden Spurtle World Porridge Making Championships, Inverness-shire, north Scotland (8 October)

A day of family filled activities celebrating Scotland's national dish with porridge enthusiasts competing to become World Porridge Making Champion. www.goldenspurtle.com

Whisky festivals

The Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival (in 2016 it took place between 28 April and 2 May) is four days of whisky fun in Scotland's whisky centre of Speyside; this year also saw World Whisky Day take place on 21 May will see whisky events run all over the world but particularly in its home Scotland. www.spiritofspeyside.com, www.worldwhiskyday.com

Wales

Royal Welsh Show, Builth Wells, Powys, Mid Wales (18 – 21 July)

This popular agricultural show isn't just about cows and combine harvesters, but a showcase of locally produced food and craft stalls, live music and stunt displays. www.rwas.co.uk/royal-welsh-show

Abergavenny Fine Food Festival, south-east Wales (17 – 18 September)

One of the biggest events in Britain's food calendar. *The Observer* said 'Abergavenny is to food as Cannes is to film – an annual festival for spotting rising stars in Britain's artisan food firmament', which gives some idea of the festival's fame. The Festival takes place on five sites in the centre of town hosting more than 200 exhibitors, cookery demonstrations, a children's Food Academy and other entertainment. Alongside this is a programme of individually ticketed masterclasses, tutored tastings, workshops, walks and talks featuring some of the best in the culinary world. www.abergavennyfoodfestival.com

Northern Ireland

Hillsborough Oyster Festival (30 August – 4 September)

Fun and entertainment for all the family, now in its 22nd year. The programme is still to be confirmed, but if it's anything like last year's – featuring the World Oyster Eating Championships, the Miss Oyster Pearl finals, a fashion show, a soap box derby, a golf tournament, a motoring event and a gala ball – it promises to be a fun-packed festival. <http://hillsboroughoysterfestival.com>

Belfast Beer and Cider Festival (Dates TBC)

CAMRA Northern Ireland (the Campaign for Real Ale) is passionate about good beer and championing the cause to make it more available. The association will be serving up one of the biggest bars in Ireland, selling almost 100 real ales and 20 real ciders and perries. There will be live music alongside other fun and games to provide all-round entertainment. 2015's event took place in November. www.belfastbeerfestival.co.uk