

Travel

Page

48

‘The streets were empty and it was possible to fall in love with the island again’

Adrian Mourby explores a pleasantly subdued Santorini

Book ahead



Milna on Brac Island, Croatia **2**

25 fabulous foodie escapes

From the vineyards of Sussex to spice markets in India and gastronomic islands in Greece — **Sean Newsom** has the tastiest trips

1 Sample Georgia's ancient wine culture

If you bury grape juice for a winter it turns into wine — the Georgians discovered that 8,000 years ago, and winemaking, ancient and modern, plays a central role in this private tour through the country's culture and cuisine. It's a heady mix. At Kakheti you will learn about Georgia's new wave of natural wines over a lunchtime concert. Later, in the mountains, you'll enjoy a cheese tasting at Poka monastery, as well as a tour of a troglodyte city where locals in the 12th century hid from Genghis Khan.

Details Ten nights' B&B from £2,425pp, including flights and some other meals (regent-holidays.co.uk)

2 Board a culinary cruise in Croatia

Over the past 2,000 years Romans, Venetians, Austrians, Turks and Slavs have stirred Croatia's culinary pot. They have had a rich list of ingredients to draw on too, and the result is a range of dishes unlike any other. This slow-boat gulet cruise from Split offers a dazzling island-hopping introduction. Buzara seafood stews, goat-kid peka and homemade chocolates infused with herbs feature on the itinerary, as do the intensely flavoured local wines grk and dingac.

Details Seven nights' full board from £3,465pp, including transfers. Departs

on September 27 (petersommer.com). Fly to Split and back from Dubrovnik

3 Take a slow train through Slovenia

Slovenia is this year's European Region of Gastronomy and well suited to a leisurely, self-guided rail journey from the Julian Alps to the Gulf of Venice. The riches of its larder are a constant refrain — pungent olive oils, sardines from the Adriatic, succulent peaches — but it's the regional variations that you'll remember. Here, robust mountain sausage gives way to decadent city cakes, while in the Gorizia Hills you'll sample some sensational ▶



Khachapuri cheese and egg pastry in Georgia

40 Travel

► wines — notably the peppery, ruby-red teran from the indigenous refosco grapes.

Details Seven nights' B&B from £1,431pp, including flights, transfers and trains (inntravel.co.uk)

4 Ceviche in the Cyclades

The pioneering Greek food writer Nicholas Tselementes first put Sifnos on the map in the Fifties with his book *Greek Cookery*. Seventy years later, restaurants such as Agianemi, Café Drakakis and Omega 3 have made it a foodie hub once more, with everything from Peruvian-style amberjack *tiradito* to simple aubergine dishes. Meanwhile, down on the beach at Platis Gialos, the Verina Terra hotel beckons, with home-baked bread and *drouvas* — traditional canvas picnic bags — packed with lunchtime goodies.

Details Seven nights' B&B from £1,099pp, including flights and transfers (islandsofgreece.co.uk)

5 Michelin-starred Midlands

Solihull may not be the first name that springs to mind when you're contemplating a food-filled staycation, but Hampton Manor might just change your mind. The 19th-century former home of Sir Robert Peel is a grand affair of stately proportions, where house party-style weekends kick off with dinner among greenhouses and fire pits in the walled garden. There are wine tastings (they've won prizes for their natural wines list), food workshops, and a fabulous tasting menu at the Michelin-starred Peel's restaurant. Squeeze in an afternoon tea if you can, or take a three-mile leg-stretch to the Bulls Head in Barston.

Details Two nights' half-board from £395pp (hamptonmanor.com)

6 Be part of Glasgow's restaurant revival

In January, Glasgow got its first Michelin star in 18 years. It went to Cail Bruich, where Lorna McNee's canny and beautiful cooking — Peterhead cod and little gem lettuce; Tunworth cheese, quince jam and poached pear — has paved the way for a restaurant revival in the city's West End. The Senegalese super-chef Modou Diagne has added to the excitement at the newly opened Ill by Modou. So book ahead, base yourself at the local Hotel du Vin and get your weekend off to a flying start with watermelon daiquiris at the Dockyard Social.

Details Doubles from £125 (hotelduvin.com)

7 Cheesemaking in Norway

In 2016 a blue cheese from Nordmore stunned aficionados and carried off a world cheese award from the Guild of Fine Food. Travel to Trondheim on the five-day Reconnect in Norway trip and you'll discover why as you try your hand at cheesemaking, foraging for shellfish, and cooking traditional meatballs. The itinerary takes you under the skin of Norway's culture and landscapes, as well as its cuisine, so you'll also walk some of St Olav's pilgrimage trail and track musk ox in a national park.

Details Four nights' B&B from £1,835pp, including flights, transfers and activities (orginaltravel.co.uk)



19 Herdade da Malhadinha Nova, Portugal

8 A taste of Tuscany

With hilltop Cortona in the distance, and Siena, Assisi and Perugia all about an hour's drive away, the Il Falconiere hotel has day trips in every direction. But the chances are you won't be going far — at least not until you've joined one of the syrah-versus-cabernet wine tastings or had a cookery lesson with Silvia Baracchi, the head chef. This is the Tuscany of your daydreams: a 17th-century manor house girdled by vineyards and olive groves, and equipped with a Michelin-starred restaurant — wild boar, woodcock and local cheeses feature on its menu.

Details Three nights' B&B from £749pp, including flights and car hire (kirkerrholidays.com)

9 Gourmet caravan park

Yes, you read that correctly — over the past 12 years the White Lodge Caravan Park has been home to the Marram Grass, one of north Wales's most talked-about restaurants. It's all down to the natural talents of Ellis Barrie, chef and son of the owner, who started out helping his dad by making all-day breakfasts. Now he marshals a menu with ingredients that include local oysters, home-reared Tamworth pigs and Jerusalem artichokes. You don't have to bring your own caravan, either — the family recently opened a suite of crisp, Scandi-style rooms.

Details B&B doubles from £130 (themarramgrass.com)

10 Seafood in Andalusia

Here's all the deliciousness of southern Spain distilled into one small town: Vejer de la Frontera, a jumble of hilltop buildings, cobbled lanes and views down to the Costa de la Luz. On a three-day cooking course you'll fit in a tapas tour, market trips, sherry tastings and cooking lessons with Annie B, a longtime resident. You'll stay in the wonderful Hotel La Casa del Califa, on the town's pretty Plaza de España — breakfast here is the business.

Details Four nights' B&B from £1,180pp (anniebSpain.com). Fly to Jerez

11 Provençal markets

Northern Provence loves a big street market. Hundreds of stalls flood Vaison-la-Romaine on Tuesdays, Nyons



7 Trondheim, Norway

on Thursdays and Carpentras on Fridays; string bags groan with olives, bread, charcuterie, and magnificent fruit and veg. Add a few bottles of velvety Gigondas wine and you've got the ingredients for a memorable week of alfresco lunches. Just outside Vaison, Mas Mayeaux is the pick of the local villas, complete with big garden, a rustic château vibe and — crucially — the kind of shady terrace on which your midday meal will easily stretch to nightfall.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for eight from £3,311 (oliverstravels.com). Fly to Marseilles

12 An Indian feast

Spice markets, street food and cookery classes feature on this colourful private tour that flits from Delhi to Lucknow and on to Mumbai. En route you'll explore three distinct culinary traditions — including at the Ahilya Fort Hotel in Maheshwar, Madhya Pradesh — and sample a palate-stretching range of flavours, from the tamarind chutney or deep-fried *pani puri* snacks to gooey, pumpkin-flavoured *panchhi petha* sweets. With the Taj Mahal and the Mughal architecture of Lucknow also on the menu, there's a feast for the eyes too.

Details Eleven nights' B&B from £3,295pp, including flights, some other meals, tours and tastings (corinthiantravel.co.uk)

13 Hunt for truffles in the Apennines

October is white truffle season in Le Marche and on this week-long series of autumnal walks you will spend a day

with a local funghi-finder and his keen-nosed dogs. The dinner afterwards is sure to be a highlight, but there will be plenty more as you explore the forests, mountains and vineyards around Urbino, Bacciardi and Gubbio. On day one you'll see paintings by Raphael, Titian and Piero della Francesca at Urbino's ducal palace, and on day four peer into the Furlo Gorge, popularly known as Italy's Grand Canyon.

Details Seven nights' full board from £3,095pp, including flights, transfers and tastings. Departs on October 16 (wildfrontierstravel.com)

14 Whisky and wagyu in the Highlands

Until now Scotland's northernmost luxury hotel has been known principally for its golf. But that may change after April 26, when Links House at Royal Dornoch reopens with a new restaurant, Mara, and a range of excursions that explore the deep local roots of its food. Guests can go cheese and whisky tasting, as well as foraging for dulse, a red seaweed that's delicious in soup. Orkney scallops, Highland wagyu beef and Portmahomack lobster tail tortellini await on Mara's menus.

Details Two nights' half-board from £337pp, including a bottle of champagne (linkshousedornoch.com)

15 Lip-smacking Lake District

In the past five years Lake District cuisine has had a renaissance and its chefs are raring to go this spring. At the



A dish from the Angel at Hetton in Yorkshire



GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY; FREDERIC DUCOUT

Samling, Robby Jenks's assured and inventive cooking will be on show again from April 12, albeit in pared-down, picnicky form on its terrace. Then, from May 17, the full splendour of lunch or dinner in the hotel's glass-walled restaurant will be back on, given extra sparkle by one of the best wine lists in the north. Imagine: Herdwick lamb with cucumber, anchovy and tomato, and a glass of Nyetimber fizz to celebrate. **Details** B&B doubles from £410 (thesamlinghotel.co.uk)

16 Porto will leave your mouth watering

Porto has a new foodie hub. Opened last year, World of Wine mixes museums, restaurants and wine tastings to buzzing, bibulous effect, and has recently added its own brand of chocolate, Vinte Vinte, to the attractions. It's the perfect launchpad for a weekend exploring the city's wine lodges, as well as snacking on sardines and heavenly *pasteis de nata* (custard tarts) on a walking tour (from £65; tasteparto.com). The historic Pestana Vintage Porto hotel offers an atmospheric refuge, with views over the River Douro. **Details** B&B doubles from £145 (pestanacollection.com). Fly to Porto

17 Yorkshire's finest

The celebrated chef Michael Wignall can't wait to work with Yorkshire's spring produce. With a May 20 reopening pencilled in, he's planning to combine local rainbow trout with the

ramson berries he pickled last year, as well as Yorkshire's famous rhubarb in a mouthwatering take on crumble: aerated white chocolate, ginger sponge, burnt-butter crumb, and Tahitian vanilla custard. Check into his pub, the Angel at Hetton, for the night — there are two newly refurbished rooms, as well as the four that were done last year. **Details** Half-board doubles from £295 (angelhetton.co.uk)

18 Crete treats

Crete's culinary delights are so straightforward there's often no need to cook: tomatoes as sweet as strawberries; wild thyme honey on yoghurt; olive oil drizzled on just about everything. Join the food writer Rosemary Barron for a nine-day tour and you'll sample them all, and meet home cooks, wine producers, bakers and farmers. The White Mountains provide a thrilling backdrop throughout. **Details** Eight nights' B&B from £3,580pp, including flights, transfers and some other meals. Departs on September 26 (martinrandall.com)

19 Portugal's larder

The Alentejo is known as the breadbasket of Portugal but, as you'll discover on this self-drive tour, its flavours go way beyond wheat. At the Torre de Palma wine hotel you can try sausage pie made with grilled quinces, and lemon and cinnamon crumble. Meanwhile, the Herdade da Malhadinha Nova estate specialises in nutty Iberian pork. The hotels are elegant, the hilltop towns charming, and



10 Vejer de la Frontera, Spain



12 Ahilya Fort Hotel in India

everywhere you turn there are wines made from indigenous grapes.

Details Seven nights' B&B from £1,059pp, including flights and hire car (sunvil.co.uk)

20 Southeast Asia odyssey

This is your chance to cook Cambodian food like Gordon Ramsay. Yes really — the shouty chef learnt how to make stuffed frog with kreung paste in the Sala Roluos cookery school in Siem Reap. You will too, combining turmeric, garlic and lemongrass to delicious effect. It's the first of several vivid experiences on this 20-day tour of Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand that will change your understanding of southeast Asian cuisine. You'll also tour Ho Chi Minh City on a Vespa, eat in some of the region's hottest restaurants and go shopping in a Mekong River floating market.

Details Eighteen nights' B&B from £4,295pp, including flights, transfers and some other meals (bambootravel.co.uk)

21 Culinary secrets of northern Spain

Pintxos is a form of Basque tapas, and in seaside San Sebastian talented chefs have elevated them into a gastronomic art form. On a three-day tour you'll learn some of their secrets, whipping

up squid-ink calamari, braised veal cheeks, and bites of *bacalao* (cod) with garlic and paprika. You'll also shop at the Bretxa market before cooking a hake and clam stew. Accommodation is in the Hotel Maria Cristina — a recently restored belle époque behemoth on the Old Town's doorstep.

Details Two nights' B&B from £1,800pp, including flights, transfers, tastings and lessons (abercrombiekent.co.uk)

22 Explore the vineyards of Sussex

If ever there were a year for English wine-tasting, it must surely be 2021. This two-night tour also supplies a heady dose of English horticulture by putting you up in Gravetye Manor, which has eight full-time gardeners tending the grounds. Once you've settled into its elegant embrace (it also has a Michelin-starred restaurant) it's time to explore the surrounding Sussex vineyards. Itineraries can vary, but among the favourites is Artelium; its Estate Makers Rosé 2015 coaxes all kinds of berry flavours from chardonnay, pinot noir and meunier grapes.

Details Two nights' B&B from £1,094pp, including tours, tastings and some meals (smoothred.com)

23 Gastronomic delights in the Dolomites

It's not just the scenery that will blow your hiking boots off in Alta Badia, where Alpine and Adriatic influences come together to create one of the richest, most wide-ranging cuisines in the mountains. St Hubertus is the pin-up restaurant, with three Michelin stars and a budget-busting £240 tasting menu. But there's good cooking at every level — as you'll discover first-hand by joining one of four £17 cookery lessons that run each July and August in the region's gastronomic mountain refuges (altabadia.org).

Details Seven nights' half-board from £997pp, including flights and transfers (ingham.co.uk)

24 Fine Aussie wines

South Australia's Epicurean Way does what it says on the tin; the gastronomic route takes in four of the state's most highly rated wine regions: the Adelaide Hills, McLaren Vale and the Barossa and Clare valleys. It's not all about the wine, though: craft breweries, distilleries and markets pepper the route, with the Currant Shed among many outstanding restaurants.

Details Ten nights' B&B from £2,149pp including flights, transfers, car hire and guiding (trailfinders.com)

25 Pizza heaven in Herefordshire

Little Pomona's Cidery is the place to start. The tasting room among the treehouses at Brook House Woods is sure to set you up for a food-filled country weekend. Pub walks beckon across the surrounding fields, as do farm shops at Bromyard and the Nest, near Ledbury. Meanwhile, Michelin-starred Pensons is a 15-minute drive away. You won't always want to eat out, though. Brook House Woods has its own wood-burning pizza ovens and will deliver pizza-making starter packs to your door.

Details One night's self-catering in a treehouse for two from £160 (canopyandstars.co.uk)



Mara, Scottish Highlands