



BritainTM

You're invited

**Scotland's
Year of Food
and Drink**



Let's eat!

In 2010, more Michelin stars have been handed to UK restaurants than any other time in the 35 year history of the gastronomic award.

The British food scene is now more exciting than ever. With a broad mix of food and drink experiences on offer- from fine dining at Michelin-starred establishments to the international flavours of restaurants offering global cuisine, Britain has indeed become a playground for discerning gourmands and enthusiastic foodies.

In recent years, big and small establishments have been embracing the strong move towards the use of seasonal, sustainable and organic ingredients available throughout Britain. And why wouldn't they? Britain is blessed with bountiful produce offering variety and quality all year round.

A great place to start off your Britain food discovery is Scotland. The first ever worldwide culinary tourism report has recently tipped Scotland at the top of the culinary tourism scene. With 15 Michelin-starred restaurants dotting the region from capital city Edinburgh all the way up to the Highlands, over 120 whisky distilleries

throughout the country, masterclasses from Britain's best chefs, and countless local restaurants that showcase Scotland's local and seasonal produce, you will be spoilt for choice at the variety of offerings at different times of the year.

It's no wonder, The International Culinary Tourism Association declared Scotland as one of the most "unique, memorable and interesting" places for food and drink on the planet.

Cover page: Martin Wishart at Cameron House Hotel in Loch Lomond

We hope you enjoy going through pages and pages of glorious food from Scotland.

If you're left craving for more, visit www.eatscotland.com and www.visitbritain.com for more scrumptious food suggestions in Britain.

Images courtesy of www.visitbritainimages.com, www.scottishviewpoint.com, Rob McDougall, David Gordon



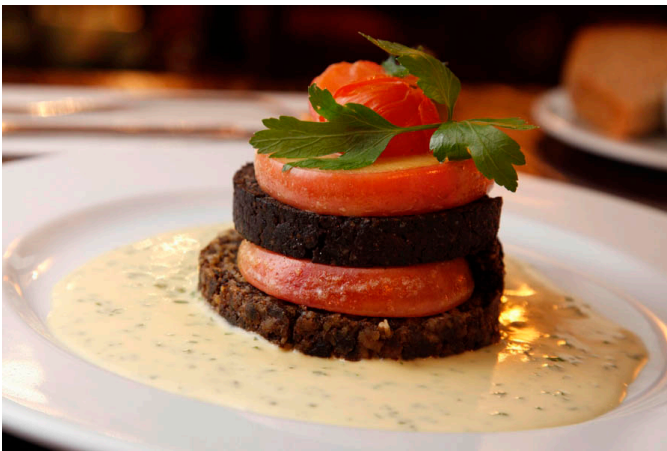
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Scotland is a gourmet paradise. Soak in the sights, fill up your belly, and go on a holiday you will never forget.





Martin Wishart at Loch Lomond

www.martin-wishart.co.uk/martin-wishart-loch-lomond/home.aspx

Michelin-starred chef Martin Wishart, brings his award winning cuisine to Cameron House Hotel on Loch Lomond. This beautiful restaurant offers a delicate balance of the fine dining experience while offering a relaxed environment where guests can enjoy the scrumptious cuisine amidst the backdrop of the Loch Lomond's spectacular mountainside.



Bukhara

<http://bukharah.com>

In true East meets West fashion, Bukhara brings together exotic Indian flavours with the latest seasonal ingredients from Scotland. This fine Indian restaurant bagged Restaurant of the Year and Chef of the Year, from the Scottish Curry Awards 2010



The Sisters Restaurant

www.thesisters.co.uk

What started off as a tiny hole in the wall in Glasgow's West End, is now a local favourite at the heart of Glasgow. Offering "a taste of the real Scotland", this restaurant offers fresh ingredients and authentic Scottish cooking.

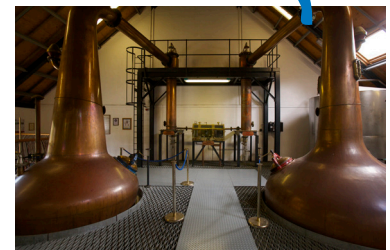


Red Onion

www.red-onion.co.uk

Chef to the stars John Quigley has cooked for many a rock star, including Bryan Adams, Tina Turner, and Guns n Roses. Nowadays, he is rocking the restaurant scene in Glasgow with his chic casual restaurant Red Onion. A favourite among locals and celebrities, the Red Onion counts among its recent diners celebrities such as George Clooney, Jon Bon Jovi, and Kelly Clarkson.

The Scotlan



are finished in casks which or
dry red Italian wine), sauter
distillery is relatively new, op
rare independently-owned dis
in the historic hamlet of Loch
and has a café. It is a must-vis
an hour by ferry off the West
to the ferry terminal takes one

d Food Map

Edinburgh



Valvona & Crolla

www.valvonacrolla.co.uk

Founded in 1934, this is Scotland's oldest delicatessen and one of Europe's original specialist food shops; no trip to Edinburgh is complete without stopping by for their specialist items, or even a cup of Italian coffee.



IJ Mellis Cheesemongers

<http://www.mellischeese.co.uk/>

One of Scotland's renowned cheesemongers, IJ Mellis stocks the finest European cheeses and other accompaniments. Treat yourself to Scottish, English, Irish, Spanish, French, Italian and Dutch cheeses, as well as a wide selection of biscuits, antipasto, oils and vinegars, among other fine food items.



Ondine

www.ondinerestaurant.co.uk

Seafood to die for. Helmed by Culinary Institute of Scotland Chef of the Year 2010 Roy Brett, the menus at Ondine marry sustainability with seasonality.



Castle Terrace Restaurant

www.castleterracerestaurant.com

Imbibing culinary prodigy Tom Kitchin's "Nature to Plate" philosophy, this restaurant represents Scotland's seasonal ingredients at its freshest and finest.

Isle of Arran Distillery

www.arranwhisky.com

The Isle of Arran distillery is famous for its Arran Malt, and for limited edition whiskies with wine finish. These whiskies are originally made from malted barley, not wine. The distillery was founded in 1994, and is one of the smallest distilleries in Scotland. Isle of Arran Distillery, located on the island of Arran, offers tastings and tours, and is a must-visit on a day trip to Arran Island, just off the Firth of Clyde Coast. The drive from Glasgow is about an hour.

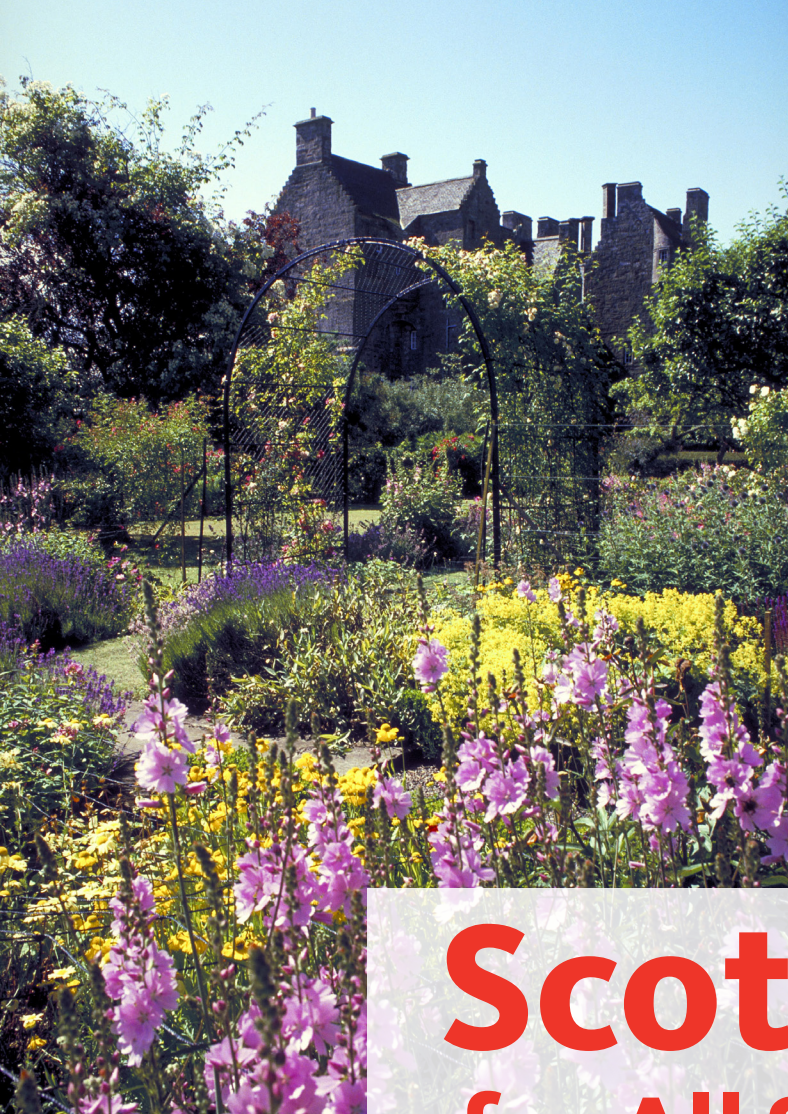
Deconstructing the Platter

Tucked in a the small Scottish border town of Langholm is *Douglas Hotel*, a family run hotel that that boasts of a small yet extremely popular restaurant, known for its unassuming menu and flavourful, seasonal dishes. Last summer, Douglas Hotel scored a winner with its fresh take on some traditional Scottish dishes.

Here's a look at what went into this amazing starter:

- **Cherry tomatoes** – sourced from a local producer called Cochrane's Nurseries, located just 11miles off the Douglas Hotel. Cochrane's Nurseries is a local grower of fruits and vegetables, and are also known for their flowers.
- **Apples** – grown at a local garden tended to by Douglas Hotel. They also grow lettuce, herbs and seasonal produce that they use for their restaurant specials.
- **Black pudding** – from local company Buccleuch estates, based in the food town of Castle Douglas, an hour away from Langholm. Black pudding is a traditional sausage made from blood, and is a staple element in Scottish breakfasts.
- **Haggis** – from local company Buccleuch estates. Haggis is quintessentially Scottish, it hardly needs any introduction. It is used as the main element in this dish, lying on a bed of whisky sauce
- **Whisky sauce** – a homemade sauce made of whisky, stock, onions, and cream; a perfect accompaniment to the hearty haggis in this dish, lying on a bed of whisky sauce





Scotland for All Seasons

The region's top chefs weigh in on their
favourite seasonal flavours, and lets you in
on their fondest memories





Craig Sandle

Craig Sandle joined The Balmoral's **number one** as Sous Chef in 2003, and has since assisted in taking the restaurant from strength to strength. Named Head Chef in 2006, he has been instrumental in the restaurant amassing a superb collection of prestigious accolades, including its first Michelin star.

Spring

Previous page, clockwise from top left: Spring in Kellie Castle, Fife; Five Sisters of Kintail, Highlands; Winter scene in Loch Tulla in Argyll and Bute; Autumn scene in Loch Etive in Strathclyde

SPRING IN SCOTLAND

Q: What is your earliest memory of spring?

Picking peas from my dad's vegetable patch in the garden. You can't get them any fresher, although leaving the empty pods behind was a clear giveaway that I had visited!

Q: What is the best spot in Scotland to enjoy spring?

Spring is great time for beautiful walks along the coast or the Perthshire countryside. Also, in my garden planting the young herbs and vegetables for that year.

Q: What is your must-have ingredient for spring?

Too many to choose one – Scottish lamb, Eassie Farm's asparagus, wild leeks.

SCOTTISH CUISINE

Q: What one adjective would you like the world to use to describe Scottish food?

Warming. It needs to be.

Q: What is for you the most unique quality of Scottish food?

We have a great array of wonderful produce including shellfish, fish, game, wild mushrooms, berries, lamb and beef.

Q: What is the secret to cooking Scottish food?

With Scottish cooking, one has to let the ingredients stand out – don't mask them.



*From left:
clementines in a
farmer's market;
Perthshire coast*

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Q: What are the ingredients for a great chef?

Treating people and the food the way they should be, accompanied by passion, dedication and team spirit.

Q: What is your favourite music track/song to cook to?

When I'm cooking at home, it's usually children's songs to keep my kids happy, and to be honest, I don't mind a wee sing-a-long with them. It's trying to do the actions and cook at the same time that can be challenging!

Q: What is your secret culinary guilty pleasure?

I love fruit which is not so guilty, but the pastry chef says I go through a tray of clementines a week when they are in season.

Q: God summons you to cook his supper. What would you serve?

Haggis, neeps & tatties – a good hearty scran to keep him going for a while.





Summer



Nick Nairn

Nick started his first restaurant Braeval in 1986. By 1991, he was Scotland's youngest chef ever to be awarded a Michelin star.

Nick is kept busy with his television series and various appearances, writing cookery books, and managing the **Nick Nairn Cook School**, a state-of-the-art facility for food lovers to learn and appreciate the best in Scottish food and cooking. Nick is a highly respected consultant to the food and drink industry, and a regular contributor to newspaper and magazine articles.

SUMMER IN SCOTLAND

Q: What is the best spot in Scotland to enjoy summer?

Summer in the Trossachs is fabulous, even better with a picnic on top of a hill.

Q: What do you like best about summer?

The heat of the sun.

Q: What is your must-have ingredient for summer?

My wife Holly's garden produces the best salad greens, which are perfect for summer.

SCOTTISH CUISINE

Q: What one adjective would you like the world to use to describe Scottish food?

Scottish food is very earthy and soulful.

Q: What is for you the most unique quality of Scottish food?

Scotland is incredibly fortunate to have the best produce on the planet, and that's no exaggeration. We've got beautiful, unpolluted oceans, brimming with lobster, scallops, langoustine, crab, mussels, oysters and all manner of fish. Our fields abound with happy native-breed cattle such as Highland Belted Galloway, Aberdeen Angus – not to mention some stunning dairy herds and hill lamb. We've got gourmet game all over the place, and to top all that, we're the world's biggest producer of succulent berries and soft fruit. It's an amazing natural larder.



FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Q: What are the ingredients for a great chef?

A chef must have flair, passion and tenacity. Scottish chefs use our natural ingredients with an instinctive understanding of how to make the best of what's in season – and that's what is great about Scottish cooking, making the produce the star and producing food to sublime standards.

Q: God summons you to cook his supper. What would you serve?

To start with I'd serve a langoustine salad with hot garlic butter, for main course roast saddle of roe deer with braised cabbage and a game gravy and to finish I'd serve a hot raspberry soufflé. Fresh Scottish langoustine, roe deer and raspberries – heavenly!



Previous page, from left: Nick Nairn; raspberries from Kirklee Allotments, Glasgow

This page, clockwise from top: fresh strawberries; Swan gliding across Lake Teith in the Trossachs



Autumn

restaurant and chef Tom have received nationwide recognition with a number of accolades and awards. Nowadays, Tom regularly appears on televisions, works on his cookery book, and manages his latest project, Castle Terrace Restaurant, with Edinburgh-born chef Dominic Jack.

AUTUMN IN SCOTLAND

Q: What is your earliest memory of autumn?

I always associate the burnt, sweet, charcoaly aroma of roasted chestnuts with autumn and I still buy a bag when I see them as I enjoy them so much.

Q: What is the best spot in Scotland to enjoy autumn?

Growing in the Scottish countryside, I spent many autumn days foraging for mushrooms and taking them back to my nana's house, and so some of our best family days in autumn are when Michaela and I take our son Kasper foraging for mushrooms in the woods in Perthshire.



Tom Kitchen

Tom Kitchen opened his first restaurant, The Kitchen with his wife Michaela, on Edinburgh's Leith waterfront in 2006. Since then, he has taken the nation's culinary scene by storm.

The Kitchen's philosophy 'From Nature to Plate', is a true reflection of Tom's passion for the finest Scottish seasonal produce. In 2007, The Kitchen was awarded a coveted Michelin-star only six months after it opened, and since then the

SCOTTISH CUISINE

Q: What one adjective would you like the world to use to describe Scottish food?

The underlying influence on Scottish food is the abundance of fresh, natural ingredients at our disposal and because of this I would probably have to describe Scottish cuisine as honest.

Q: What is for you the most unique quality of Scottish food?

Simplicity. Good Scottish chefs rely on the natural larder for creation of exceptional dishes and due to the unspoilt environment and an unextreme climate we have perfect conditions to produce high quality food.

Q: What is the secret to cooking Scottish food?

The most important advice I can give is to know your produce. Knowing what is in season makes it easier to make the most of the ingredients on your doorstep and allows you to enjoy food when it's at its freshest and very best.



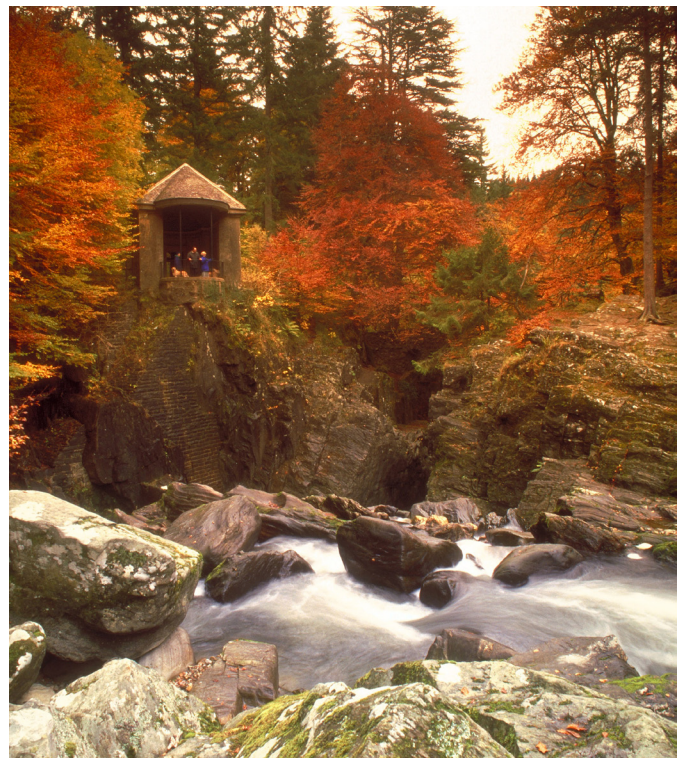
FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Q: What are the ingredients for a great chef?

Learn the basics well. Taking time to really get to know and respect produce and ingredients allows a good chef to not only put their passion and personality into each dish but also show restaurant guests you have really thought about the menu.

Q: What is your secret culinary guilty pleasure?

In autumn, nothing beats game. You can't really get more seasonal than wild game. Woodcock in particular is an absolute pleasure to prepare. I follow the classic recipe and use the intestines to create a delicious pate and the bones for a sauce. I always serve the bird with the head cut in half as woodcock brains are a true delicacy.



Previous page, from left, Tom Kitchin; Autumn in Lady Mary's Walk in Perthshire

This page, from left: dish of roast lamb on mashed potato; The Hermitage, Tayside, Perthshire



Alison Skyora

Alison Sykora is Chef Manager at Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute, ancient stronghold of Scottish kings.

A leading voice in food and tourism since 1971, Alison regularly shares her experience and expertise on television, radio and print. Alison also has varied collaborations with Slow Food, The Soil Association and other government-led initiatives, and regularly champions and undertakes projects to expose students to the joys of cooking for the first time.



WINTER IN SCOTLAND

Q: What is your earliest memory of winter?

My first experience of snow. I was 3 years old, holding out my hand to my mother who had given me a snowball. I thought snow was the most magical substance I had ever encountered. It still makes me laugh with joy to wake up to see snow on the ground.

Q: What is the best spot in Scotland to enjoy winter?

The winter climate on Bute is mild because of its sheltered position – the island is nestled between the pincers of the Cowal Peninsular and is protected from the worst of winter weather by Arran. The contrast between mild settled days and wild, exhilarating winter

storms ensures that there is always some excitement in the weather. Snow rarely lies on the ground for more than a day or two, which makes it all the more welcome and special. The views over the water from the low hills, looking out in every direction, make winter walking on the island such a pleasure.

Q: What is your must-have ingredient for winter?

Oatmeal, good plain healthy food. It's just not winter if you don't start the day with a good bowl of porridge.

SCOTTISH CUISINE

Q: What one adjective would you like the world to use to describe Scottish food?

'Hearty' – Scottish food fills your soul, gets you through the day, and nourishes your friends and family.

Q: What is the most unique quality of Scottish food?

It's uniquely under-appreciated, and that hurts my heart. We need to revisit our use of oatmeal, seaweed, oily fish, dark green leafy vegetables like kale, and everything locally grown and freshly picked, and really celebrate it.

FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Q: What are the ingredients for a great chef?

Love, passion, balance.

Q: What is your secret culinary guilty pleasure?

Rose Harissa Paste. It adds spice, warmth and light to everything it touches; the rose petals mean that even in the depths of winter you can imagine summer just around the corner...

Q: God summons you to cook his supper. What would you serve?

Something light, an omelette with eggs from our hens and a few fresh herbs from the garden, some home-grown salad leaves, a few tomatoes from the greenhouse, dressed with some oil and a little lemon juice, a hunk of handmade bread and maybe some of the last truckle of mature Bute cheddar. Simple food.



Previous page from left: Alison Sykora; Winter scene at Kilchurn Castle

This page: Scottish oatmeal

Stars of the Table

Haggis and whisky may be the most popular representatives of Scottish cuisine, but Scotland's larder is brimming with food finds best served in Scotland. Get to know some mouth-watering delights that shine all on their own...



1

Cheese

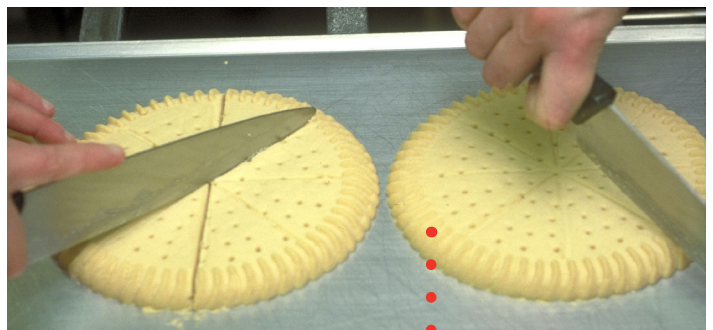
The region's geography and climate lends itself well to cheesemaking, and indeed Scotland has a rich tradition of making cheese. Try Isle of Mull cheese, an artisan cheese made of unpasteurised milk, with strong cheddar notes, and some blueing (if you're lucky).



2

Langoustines

Otherwise known as scampi or Norwegian Lobster, majority of the world's supply are caught in Scotland. Their sweet, succulent meat is best flash boiled or grilled to retain its texture and flavour.



3

Shortbread

Flour, sugar and butter are all the ingredients that go into these heavenly biscuits. Invented in Scotland, these sweet, buttery treats were traditionally a luxury reserved for special occasions, but are now widely available as a regular indulgence.



4

Hand-dived scallops

Collected through the environmentally-friendly and sustainable method of hand diving, these sweet, firm and juicy, hand-dived scallops retain their flavour best when cooked right away. Scotland's restaurants are known to serve fresh scallops sourced from fishmongers on the same day.

5

Berries

Scotland is renowned for its berry farms, and come summertime, berries of all kinds become suddenly abundant. Visit berry farms around Perthshire that allow you to pick your own fruit-and sneak in a pop or two in your mouth.



6

Oysters

Scotland's waters provide a wide variety of shellfish and seafood, including large-salty-mildly-sweet oysters. Served fresh, cold, with a dash of lemon and a glass of wine, it's the simplest, most satisfying indulgence on a cool Scottish early evening.

Scotland's Liquid Gold

There's much to learn for the newcomer to the world of whisky. Here we cover some of the basics



Know Your Whisky

Most distilleries are sited near a source of pure water such as a river, lake or spring. Barley, the main ingredient of whisky, is 'malted' by soaking then drying in various ways – over smoking peat, for example.

There are two types of Scotch whisky - malt and grain. Each is made by a different process and with different ingredients. A single malt is the product of one distillery. Double malts, pure malts, vatted malts and blends contain whisky from two or more distilleries. Grain whisky as the name suggests, is made of grains, using wheat or

corn rather than barley. Ask for a Scotch in a British 'pub' or hotel bar and you will get a blend of perhaps as many as 50 different Scotch malt and Scotch grain whiskies. Very acceptable it will be, too, and blended whiskies such as this account for as much as 98% of Scotch sold.

This page, clockwise from top: Whisky stills at Glengoyne distillery; Glenfiddich distillery; whisky casks
Next page, from left: Glenfiddich distillery; Highland Park single malt whisky



The casks where whisky is matured were traditionally Spanish oak sherry barrels, discarded on the wharves of Britain when sherry was imported in bulk and bottled on arrival. Nowadays, all Spanish sherry is exported in bottles so sherry casks are a rarity, and most modern whisky is matured in bourbon barrels from America.

Appreciating Whisky

Visitors to Scotland can sign up for a Master Blenders tour to learn more about the different tasting notes of whisky.

One such tour, the Master Blenders tour of Glengoyne Distillery near Glasgow, takes students across the various regions and qualities of different

whiskies. A nose recovers its senses in 20 seconds, whereas the palate takes 20 minutes to recover between tastes and, so “students” obediently do a lot of ‘nosing’ and withhold the taste test until the end. A laboratory-style testing room offers a line-up of whiskies ranging from the heavy, peaty and smoky at one end of the scale to the light floral, spicy and creamy options at the other.

When it comes to measuring whisky, popular wisdom says a dram is as much as you pour. Officially, a dram is 25ml, but in Scotland it's also legal to serve the traditional quarter-gill, or 35ml.

If you wish to learn more about whiskies and whisky tours in Scotland, visit www.visitscotland.com

Finding the Whisky that's Right for You

The main whisky regions in Scotland are: The Lowlands, The Highlands (which includes the Islands and Speyside), Campbeltown and Islay.

Each region's whiskies carry a unique quality, impacted by their environment. Lowland whiskies tend to highlight the softness of the malt itself, Highland whiskies tend to be dry with a hint of peatiness, whiskies from Speyside are known for their elegance and complexity with a refined smokiness, Campbeltown whiskies tend to be briny, while Islay whiskies are known for their strong seaweed-y and peat flavour.



Match Made in Scotland

Pairing your food with whisky? Learn from the expert

Diners at **The Bothy** swirl, sniff and sip their drams of Scotch with a fervour usually seen in connoisseurs of wine. But at this special food-and-whisky dining adventure, wine is not on the menu. Roddy Graham, 'whisky sommelier', matches single malt whiskies to each dish of the three courses on a set menu, and explains the character and history of each as the evening progresses.

"With wine, you can choose a drink which either complements or contrasts with the food," says Roddy. "When we pair whisky with food, the flavours have to be complementary because whisky is so intense. If you try to contrast the flavours, the food is overwhelmed."

Roddy makes sure his students 'nose' the whisky properly before drinking, and suggests they take a sip with each mouthful of food before swallowing. Adding a splash of water is acceptable, although Roddy himself never dilutes his own drink.



Don't even think of adding ice or mixers. Unless you are eating curry which is an exception to the rule- with spicy foods, take your whisky as a long drink with soda.

From the starters menu, the *Pressed Duck Terrine with Plum and Port Chutney* comes with a small glass of **Benriach** single malt. It's a 15-year-old rich and winey whisky, finished for its final two years in sherry casks. Smoked salmon was matched with **Caol Ila**, which has a complementary smoky flavour, while the traditional *Haggis, Neeps and Tatties* was paired with the faintly salty **Old Pulteney**. For the main course, *Grilled Salmon with Mashed Potato, Grilled Asparagus*,





*finished with a White Wine Cream Sauce, is paired with **Highland Park**. This 12-year-old is “a good food whisky”, says Roddy, “nicely balanced, some malt, some smokiness, slightly fruity, and it has some weight”. Highland Park is Scotland’s most northern distillery, in the remote Orkney Islands. It is a classy drop, consistently winning prizes for being the best spirit and best single malt in the world.*

*Believe it or not, dessert also works well with whisky. **Orange Bread and Butter Pudding with Vanilla Pod***

*Creme Anglaise is paired with **Glen Elgin**, with the sweetness of the whisky complementing the pudding perfectly. A cheese platter would have called for a **Lagavulin**, while a rich **Bothnoffi Pie** a **Dalwhinnie**.*

*“Dining with whisky is a new idea in Glasgow, and it’s a part of a growing interest in whisky worldwide,” Roddy says. *Next time you’re in Glasgow, stop by The Bothy, a food and whisky matching dinner costs about \$75 per person. Bookings at www.socialanimal.co.uk.**



*Previous page: Roddy Graham, whisky sommelier at The Bothy
This page, clockwise from left: The Bothy restaurant; smoked salmon starter; Haggis Neeps and Tatties main course; bottles of whisky*

Eat's the Scottish way

You know Scotland has one of the world's most stunning and rugged landscapes, a mystical romanticism, and some of the friendliest folks on the planet. But did you know that Scotland has one of the world's longest lists of inventors and innovators?

Try Alexander Graham Bell (telephone), Adam Smith (father of modern economics), Alexander Fleming (penicillin)... And that's only with names starting with A! you get the idea.

Maybe it's the vagaries of the weather, maybe it's the crystal-clear spring water, but something in Scotland makes it uniquely suited for imagination and creativity.

This same spirit and proud tradition of inventiveness is now making an indelible mark on its food scene, turning Scotland into a magnet for luxury travellers and epicureans of the highest order.





number one stop

Where better in the capital to get a taste of Scotland's best than the aptly-named **number one** restaurant? Located in the Balmoral Hotel, it has retained its Michelin star for a remarkable nine years.

Headed by Chef Craig Sandle, number one puts a modern French twist on only the very best from Scotland's larder. What was particularly striking was how remarkably fresh and immediate the ingredients tasted on the plated – it

was like eating amidst Scotland's mountains and lochs. Sublime.

Edinburgh's top restaurant is naturally located in Edinburgh's top hotel, the Balmoral. The outstanding hotel dazzles in every way. Starting with its unbeatable location, within walking distance to leading luxury department stores and top attractions, throw in an award-winning spa offering incredible massages, add opulent rooms with incredible views of Edinburgh Castle and the Old Town, stir in uber-chic bars including the Bollinger Bar and viola, you have the Scottish recipe for utter luxury.

For the ultimate blowout, Scotland offers bespoke tours to match your

exquisite taste. How about a private curator giving you an exclusive tour of the 17th century stately home, Hopetoun House? Fancy being chauffeured to dinner at the celebrated **Restaurant Martin Wishart**, which gave Edinburgh its very first Michelin star in 1999? While you're at it, how about a private helicopter ride to stunning Skye for a private tour of the superb Talisker distillery, followed by dinner at the Michelin-starred Kinloch Lodge?

Wherever your imagination takes you, trust Scotland to have something on offer.

Previous page: Diners at The Ubiquitous Chip restaurant

This page, clockwise from top: Balmoral Hotel; Michelin-starred chef Martin Wishart; Martin putting the final touches on a pheasant dish; number one restaurant





See it, cook it, taste it

Spurred on by Scotland's fabulous larder? Well, food action does not get any closer than cooking it yourself, so make a beeline for **Nick Nairn's Cook School** in Stirling, where the celebrity chef's vision of Scottish food is celebrated from ground to plate.



"Here, produce is truly king"



Chef Tristan Campbell in a masterclass session; preparing wild mushrooms; final touches on a main course

Here, produce is truly king – not only will you learn to cook up a Scottish storm, you will do so using fresh, organic herbs and vegetables from the in-house garden, smoked salmon from its smokehouse, and even eggs from hens on its grounds.

Watching Chef Tristan Campbell, one of Cook School's instructors, demonstrate the delicate skill of shucking and cleaning scallops, while enjoying unobstructed views of the herb garden with a glass of Nick's specially selected wines in hand, are enough to inspire students to tuck into their own culinary creations.

Go, Glasgow

While Edinburgh holds the title of cosmopolitan capital, Glasgow has oodles of edgy style, and that has lent itself to a dining flair to call its own.

Bite into The Ubiquitous Chip, one of Scotland's landmark restaurants. The eatery came on the food scene in 1971, started by veteran restaurateur Ronnie Clydesdale (who sadly passed away earlier this year). The much-loved chef was quantum leaps ahead of his time, with his use of local produce and support for environmentally sustainable and ethically farmed produce long before words like "seasonal" and "local" became fashionable food buzzwords.

Better known as The Chip (Ubiquitous is admittedly a real mouthful), it was named Scotland's Best

Restaurant 2010 by the Good Food Guide, Britain's best-selling restaurant guide. Whether you dine in the Chip's courtyard with its spectacular sky-lit greenery, opt for a touch of tradition in the dining room, or soak in the laidback charm in its brassiere, you will be sharing in the Scots' love for life-affirming food, albeit with its signature modern flair.

Heck, even down-with-the-kids singer Kylie Minogue has seen dining on venison haggis and organic Orkney salmon here.

in the laidback charm in its brassiere, you will be sharing in the Scots' love for life-affirming food, albeit with its signature modern flair.

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Frilly Fun at its Freshest

For a totally different feel to Glasgow, head for Cup. This new café is a mecca for those with a sweet tooth and a sense of irreverent fun. It has revived the fine tradition of the afternoon tea, with none of the stuffiness.

Instead... Colour! Lights! Plush seats! Giggles! Yes, you can (almost) forget your manners, and beat your friends to posting photos of your tea stand onto your Facebook page.

And what a glorious stand it was: from the savoury fingers of cucumber and cream cheese to smoked salmon to scrumptious scones with strawberry jam and clotted cream, resistance is futile for calorie counters.



"In fact, Edinburgh alone boasts five Michelin-starred restaurants, making it the best foodie city in the UK outside London."



Glaswegian luxe

If eating out in Glasgow oozes style, then staying in in Glasgow oozes understated glam.

Hotel du Vin, set in the fashionable West End, exudes a wonderful touch of luxe that at the same time celebrates the best of its Scottish heritage. The hotel's 49 sumptuous rooms are spread over five Victorian townhouses, all of which have retained the original features including dramatic stained glass and windows, and sweeping staircases. Half the fun of staying in this lovely property was venturing from house to house, just to check out the special touches and architectural gems.

Be sure to locate the hotel's delightful secret garden – the perfect spot for stirring your imagination in true Scottish fashion!



*Previous page, from left: Alfresco dining area at The Chip; starter from The Chip; Cup tea stands; selection of pastries from Cup
This page: Suite at Hotel Du Vin; bath tub in Hotel Du Vin suite*