

# TASTEFUL TOURS

Inspired by Prue's adventures? Hannah Summers reveals how to make your own with 15 of the world's best holidays for foodies

## PIZZA PARADISE Italy

Granted, there are prettier Italian cities, but if you're charmed by grit and serious about pizza, then take a trip to its birthplace, Naples. Perfect dough laden with mozzarella (and a steal at a few euros) makes Sorbillo a front-runner. Switch up the carbs and head to the Lungomare waterfront for spaghetti vongole – and don't miss the sfogliatella riccia pastries, stuffed with locally made ricotta and candied orange. Walk it all off in one of the city's excellent museums. *Three nights at the four-star San Pietro costs from £197pp with Last Minute (087 1277 1070; lastminute.com)*

## EAT BY THE MILE Sri Lanka

Crab curries on the west coast, *pittu* and *dosai* in the Tamil north, egg hoppers in the hill country and a good cuppa at the tea plantations: Sri Lanka's food and drink changes mile to mile. Sure, you could take a two-week beach break and eat like a queen, but to truly appreciate the rich variety here it's worth digging out the stretchy trousers and exploring properly, dipping into aromatic chutneys and tangy sambals as you go. *Splurge on a new Food Mapping Journey from Sri Lanka Bespoke (020 7866 2177; srilanka-bespoke.com), travelling over Sri Lankan*

*Sinhalese and Tamil New Year. From £8,000pp; departs Heathrow on April 8*

## BBQ BOUND United States

Racking up the awards for best brisket in Texas, Franklin Barbecue restaurant has made Austin a global pilgrimage destination for barbecue lovers. Join the queue – you will be waiting a while – and you'll be rewarded with trays piled with soft, smoky beef, chunky pickles, slaw, ribs and beans so good you will wish you could recreate it at home (try the chef's masterclass and you may get close). Veggies, don't worry – Austin also has a brilliant vegan scene. Try Arlo's for the tastiest plant-based burgers. *Sleep it off at the four-star The Westin Austin Downtown on a five-night break with BA Holidays (0344 493 0787; ba.com/holidays), from £1,099pp*

## SUN AND SNACKING Greece

Combine sunbathing with serious snacking on the Greek island of Tinos, a short ferry hop from Athens or Mykonos. Here, the locals take their local produce – including thyme honey, *salcici* (garlicky salami), artichokes and cheese made from rare Tinian cows' milk – very seriously. So seriously, in fact, there is even an association to protect them. You

will have your pick of excellent tavernas: try Tarsanas for seafood and stock up on charcuterie and cheese at Teresa in Myrsini. *Olympic Holidays (020 8492 6868; olympicholidays.com) offers seven nights at the three-star Porto Raphael Residences and Suites from £699pp; departs Manchester on April 23*

## TURN UP THE HEAT Bhutan

Many people travel to Bhutan for the markets, monasteries and mountain scenery, but then there are those who arrive with a second agenda: spicy food. That includes *ema datshi* – a curry-esque dish made with chillies, cheese, onion and tomato; and *phaksha paa*, a stew of slow-cooked pork, mooli, ginger and chilli. Brace yourself: Bhutan's chillis sit near the top of the Scoville Heat Scale. *Cox and Kings (0330 173 2330; coxandkings.co.uk) offers its nine-night Dragon Kingdom group tour from £3,395pp,*

*departing from Heathrow on September 13. The price includes dinner with a local family, a cooking class and a few days spent exploring Kathmandu, in Nepal.*

## PINTXO BY THE RULES Spain

Forget the 11 Michelin-star restaurants, San Sebastián is all about the *pintxo* – the Basque equivalent of tapas.



First up: the rules. Elbow your way to the bar, knock back your cider (no sipping) and chuck your napkin on the floor when you are done. Daunted? A pintxo tour is a great way to tick off the bars with a pro by your side, sampling *gildas* (pepper, olive, anchovy on a toothpick) and *txakoli* (the salty, fizzy local wine that will have you slurring your gracias). *Evening tours with Mimo Bite the Experience* cost £96pp (*mimo.eus*). *Four nights at five-star Akellare* (with Michelin-star restaurant) costs from £1,950pp with Audley Travel (01993 838081; *audleytravel.com*)

#### THE WORLD'S FINEST FOOD FESTIVAL Australia

Heston Blumenthal called it the best food festival in the world – just part of the reason big-name chefs flock to south-western Australia's Gourmet Food Festival every November. But you're not flying 10,000 miles just for that. Combine it with an epic foodie road trip in the

Margaret River region. Drive through karri forests, stopping off at boutique wineries such as the House of Cards – a nod to the gamble of each vintage – to sample cabernet sauvignons and sauvignon blancs, and relax over brunch and the best avo and eggs on toast in the country at beachside cafés like White Elephant in Gnarabup. *Abercrombie & Kent* (01242 547760; *abercrombiekent.co.uk*) offers a 10-night Gourmet Southwest trip, allowing plenty of time for ocean dips and wine tasting, from £4,999pp; departs Manchester on November 13

#### DO IT YOURSELF County Cork

Aspiring chefs descend on Darina Allen's world-renowned Ballymaloe Cookery School for its 12-week courses, but the half-day Just Cook It classes are perfect for amateurs keen to build their confidence. You will get a run through on essential techniques and expand your repertoire with breads, starters, main courses, desserts and more. Tag on a foodie break in Cork, or a weekend at the school's country-house hotel.

*Double rooms at Ballymaloe* (00 353 2146 52531; *ballymaloe.ie*) cost from £208; half-day cooking classes cost from £96pp (*cookingisfun.ie*). *Ryanair* (01279 358395; *ryanair.com*) offers flights from Manchester to Cork from £30 return

#### STUFF YOURSELF SILLY Japan

Osaka's unofficial slogan is *kuidaore*, that's "eat 'til you drop". No surprise, then, that the city – also known as the nation's kitchen – is on most food lovers' hit lists. Combine the city's huge bowls of udon with Kyoto's Michelin stars and Tokyo's *izakaya* (bottom) – tapas-style bars akin to a pub – for the ultimate fun and full-bellied trip. *Inside Japan* (0117 244 3380; *insidejapantours.com*) offers a self-guided *Gastronomic Adventure combining the cities of Osaka, Kyoto and Tokyo*. The trip includes

*kaiseki* (multi-course) dining at traditional ryokans and meals at a Buddhist temple bolthole on Mount Koya. From £4,032pp for 14 nights; departs Heathrow on October 1

#### THE SPICE OF LIFE Laos

Land-locked Laos is often

overshadowed by Thailand and Vietnam, its beachy neighbours. Happily it still takes foodie influences from them, with a taste of Chinese and French, too. The result? Dim sum, minty laab, spicy pâté baguettes, and one of the most exciting, varied foodie holidays available in south-east Asia. In laid-back Luang Prabang you can try dishes crafted by the 2018 Best Female Chef in Asia, Bee Santongun, at Paste, before enjoying a home-cooked meal with organic veg.

*Take a culinary tour, including visits to coffee plantations, waterfalls and temples, on a Flavours of Laos trip with Inside Asia* (0117 244 3380; *insideasia-tours.com*); 10 nights cost from £2,960pp; departs Heathrow on November 2

#### SUSHI, SKYR AND SCENERY Iceland

For many decades Iceland existed as a bit of a culinary joke – fermented shark will do that. Nowadays it is home to some of the world's best foodie entrepreneurs, including Eymundur Magnússon and his barley empire at Vallanes. Meanwhile, Noro Austur, located by the sea in Seyoisfjörður, is arguably one of the world's best sushi bars. Pull it all together – the breweries, family-run Skyr businesses and more – for a scenic and delicious road trip of the east and north. *Discover the World* (01737 214250; *discover-the-world.com*) has a seven-night Northern Highlights trip costing from £1,226pp; departs Heathrow on May 2

#### MOVE OVER TUSCANY Croatia

The peninsula of Istria in



north Croatia is being hailed as the new Tuscany thanks to its olive oil, truffles and wine. There are two Michelin-star restaurants in the region, but the simplest pleasure is a plate of homemade pasta topped with black or white truffles. Truffle season begins in September and you can join the local hounds to snuffle them out.

*Chef Monica Galetti and critic Giles Coren checked in to Grand Park Hotel Rovinj (below) for the BBC's Amazing Hotels. Classic Collection (0800 008 7288; classic-collection.co.uk) offers seven nights from £1,327pp; departs Gatwick on September 24*

#### VINES, VIEWS AND VARIETY South Africa

If your dream holiday combines multi-course tasting menus, vineyard views and wine pairing, then move Cape Town to the top of your list. Local foodies will tell you that Beau Constantia, a boutique wine farm that looks out over False Bay, has one of the best restaurants in the country, the Chefs Warehouse. They're not wrong; go for veggie small plates. *A nine-night Wine and Whales self-drive trip with Kuoni (0800 422 0769; kuoni.co.uk) costs from £1,895pp; departs Heathrow on April 1*

#### BINGE FOR A BARGAIN Malaysia

Whether you nab a table at a grandma's kitchen in Kuala Lumpur, sample chicken rice balls in Malacca or dine beachside in Langkawi, good food in Malaysia is only ever sec-

onds away. You'll find your fair share of fancy restaurants but often the best dishes are found curbside. Try rice dish *nasi lemak*; roti dipped into curry; or spicy laksa noodle soup – all for a couple of pounds.

*Combine cooking classes, culture and beach time on a 13-night trip with*

*Responsible Travel (01273 823700; responsibletravel.com) from £2,950pp; departs Heathrow on August 1*

#### MASTER YOUR MOUSSES France

Become a dab hand at eclairs, croissants, brioche, mousses and macarons at Le Gargantua residential cookery school, located in a farmhouse an hour's drive from Bordeaux. You will get plenty of hands-on help on the three- or five-night patisserie courses.

*A three-night course at Le Gargantua (00 33 5 532 07535; legargantua.com) costs from £794pp. Return flights from Gatwick to Bordeaux with EasyJet (0330 551 5151; easyjet.com) cost from £40pp*

*All holidays include flights unless otherwise stated. For details of entry requirements and Covid rules for your favourite destinations, see telegraph.co.uk/tt-travelrules. More information: gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice*





