

Source URL: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-15-best-foodie-breaks-around-the-world-dqnr0rxzg>

THE TIMES

WEEKEND

The 15 best foodie breaks around the world

A gourmet walking holiday in Burgundy, Sri Lankan feasting or Michelin-starred dining in Norway. Nicola Brady picks the tastiest trips

Nicola Brady

26 Mar 2022 01:01:00

It's no secret that food can make or break a trip. We all have those hazy memories of the perfect pad thai, or a warm pain au chocolat you still dream about to this day. When holiday food is good, it's oh so good . . . fish fresh from the sea and grilled until the skin is crisp, eaten with ocean scents in the air and a glass of something cold by your plate. A pizza with a blistered crust and splodges of mozzarella, discovered down a little side street in an Italian town. Or even the gyro you eat in the early hours, after one Greek-hospitality ouzo too many.

But what if you want the food to be the star of your holiday, rather than the supporting actor? Well, you're in luck. There has been a huge upsurge in food-based breaks in recent years, whether that's a specially designed tour with cookery classes and tastings, or simply a break in a city that's perfect for foodies. You can pick rice and learn how to cook it in Sri Lanka, buy market ingredients with the experts in destinations from Chiang Mai to Marrakesh, or fish for lobsters before eating them by the sea in Canada.

But if all that sounds like too much effort, you can simply visit a place that's known for its food: Bologna, San Sebastian and Sicily are all places where you'll want to figure out a way to squeeze in an extra meal between lunch and dinner. Even better, book a trip with a bit of insider knowledge about where all the best food spots are, so you don't waste even one meal on a disappointing paella.

After all, eating abroad is a joy we were denied for far too long. From fridge-foraged dinners eaten in front of the telly to restaurant meal kits — all those endless little plastic pots! — we've done our spell of eating at home. Now it's time to head out to a pavement café and eat mussels with warm chunks of baguette on the side as the sun warms our shoulders. It's fair to say we've earned it.

1. Perfect pintxos in San Sebastian

Whether you're grazing on pintxos and sipping an ice-cold glass of txakoli or eating in one of the city's many Michelin-starred restaurants, you'll soon see San Sebastian deserves its reputation as the ultimate city for food lovers. On this three-day break, you'll get the inside scoop on where to go and what to eat. Inspired by your time in the bars, you'll learn how to make the perfect pintxos, tour the markets used by the city's top chefs and whizz out to La Rioja for a spot of wine tasting. Your base is the swish Hotel Maria Cristina.

Details

Two nights' B&B from £1,800pp, including flights and transfers (

abercrombient.co.uk

)

2. Chicago, beyond the pizza

There's far more to the Chicago food scene than deep-dish pizza, as the dozens of food tours on offer suggest. At the Revival Food Hall you can sample highlights from some of the city's best restaurants — make a beeline for Lito's Empanadas and Smoque BBQ (

revivalfoodhall.com

). It is worth heading to Lincoln Park in the north of the city just for the Athenian Room's kalamata chicken, plonked on a pile of steak fries and dripping in garlic and lemon roasting juices (£10;

athenianroom.net

). Stay central, right by Restaurant Row, at the Hoxton and you're just three minutes' walk from the life-changing burger at Au Cheval (£11;

auchevaldiner.com

).

Details

Room-only doubles from £150 (

thehoxtton.com

). Fly to Chicago

3. Street food and tagine in Marrakesh

As dusk falls over

[Marrakesh](#)

, the air fills with intoxicating smoky smells from the food stalls of Djemaa el-Fna, where charred chicken and merguez sausage is served with just-baked flatbread. But these hectic food stalls can be a little intimidating, which is why a guided tour will help you to find the best bits without the stress. The hotel Riad Star, with its Jazz Age rooms and traditional pool on the patio, has packages that include a tour of the spice stalls and food markets, as well as a cookery lesson in which you'll make your own lamb tagine.

Details

Three nights' B&B from £199pp (

marrakech-riad.co.uk

). Fly to Marrakesh

4. Go gastronomic in Norway

Declared a European Region of Gastronomy in 2022, Trondelag, including its main city, Trondheim, promises to be one for foodies to watch. Home to the world's three most northerly Michelin-starred restaurants (Credo, Fagn and Speilsalen) as well as the Trondelag Food Festival (July 28-30), this is a place where you can get into the belly of the

[Norwegian](#)

food scene. On a private trip you will learn how to make cheese, go foraging for seaweed and shellfish and cook up your own meatballs.

Details

Four nights' B&B from £1,835pp, including flights and transfers (

originaltravel.co.uk

)

5. Gourmet walking holiday in Burgundy

Ah, wine and cheese. Is there any better pairing? You can have your fill of this dream duo all over France, but in Burgundy there's even more to enjoy, from mustard in Dijon to chocolate in Beaune. So you'll want to work up an appetite. On this self-guided gourmet walking tour in Burgundy, you'll hike through medieval villages and through quiet woodland, with lashings of cheese and wine tastings, and a truffle hunt along the way. Accommodation is in characterful hotels.

Details

Six nights' B&B from £1,509pp, including flights and transfers (

headwater.com

)

6. A food adventure in Sicily

From the silken aubergines in pasta alla Norma to the sweet flesh of raw red prawns, there's great food to be

found in every corner of

[Sicily](#)

. And that's before we even mention the arancini and the cannoli. It's a big place, so to get a flavour of the whole island you'll make life easy for yourself by booking this group tour, which takes you from the street-food carts of Palermo, via a cooking class with a local chef in lesser-known Trapani, to wine tastings in Marsala and cheese-making on a family farm near Ragusa.

Details

Seven nights' B&B from £1,799pp, including flights and transfers (

exodus.co.uk

)

7. Athens flavours

The food scene in

[Athens](#)

has exploded in recent years; Greek classics are given modern twists at restaurants like Feedel Urban Gastronomy (mains from £13;

facebook.com/feedelurbangastronomy

) and Dopios (mains from £9;

dopiosrestaurant.gr

). Take a food tour and you will sample the best of the city, from bougatsa custard pies to chewy koulouri bread rings (£50;

alternativeathens.com

). You'll also explore Varvakios Market and the spice district, where you can stock up on local oregano and red saffron. The boutique hotel St George Lycabettus is surrounded by great restaurants and has killer views of the Acropolis too.

Details

Three nights' B&B from £698pp, including flights and transfers (

kirkerholidays.com

)

8. Vegan Berlin

Think of Germany and you probably think of sausage, schnitzel and Black Forest gâteau. But there's also a surprisingly strong vegan scene in the country, particularly in

[Berlin](#)

. The slow-travel company Byway has recently launched a vegan holiday planner so you can plot a trip that's flight-free as well as vegan-friendly.

●

[17 of the world's most luxurious train journeys](#)

Hotels are picked for their vegan menus and sustainable credentials. On its journey to Berlin, you will also take in Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Hamburg and Paris, hopping from one plant-based spot to another along the way. And yes, that does include a vegan currywurst.

Details

Twelve nights' B&B from £1,605pp, including trains (

byway.travel

)

9. Explore the Alentejo region

Between the resorts of the Algarve and the buzz of Lisbon, Portugal's largely rural Alentejo region offers a bit of breathing space. And it's easy on the eye too, with pretty medieval villages, walled cities and castles galore. On this self-drive tour you can duck into little restaurants and eat your fill of sausage-spiked chickpea stews and locally produced pork belly, along with heaps of the regional bread that accompanies every meal (and

even appears the next day, soaked in a garlicky broth). Your base is the lovely M'ar de Ar Muralhas hotel in 14th-century Evora.

Details

Four nights' B&B from £641pp, including flights and car hire (

sunvil.co.uk

)

10. The best of Slovenia and Croatia

The neighbouring countries might be under the radar for some food-lovers, but with spicy green olive oil, abundant seafood and excellent wine, Slovenia and

[Croatia](#)

are a never-ending source of belly-rubbing joy. Tick off both countries in one go on this group tour, which takes in the island of Korcula, where you'll learn to make hand-rolled pasta, fill up on meaty kotlovina in the Plitvice Lakes National Park, go truffle-hunting in Livade, Istria, and get to grips with Slovenian wine made from refosk and grk grapes. You will stay in a mix of hotels and boutique hostels.

Details

Ten nights' B&B from £2,320pp, including flights (

intrepidtravel.com

)

11. An Italian feast in Emilia-Romagna

Pretty much everything that you love about Italian food comes from Emilia-Romagna. From the parmesan and prosciutto of Parma to balsamic vinegar from Modena, this Italian region is a dream — it doesn't matter whether you're picnicking on mortadella in a park or dining in the three-Michelin-starred Osteria Francescana (though don't expect to get a table at short notice).

•

[Italy's best cities for food — and what to eat while you're there](#)

On a self-drive trip you can sample it all, including giant wheels of nutty parmesan in a dairy and thickly unctuous ragu in Bologna.

Details

Four nights' half-board from £1,580pp, including flights and car hire (

wexas.com

)

12. Thai food tour

If ever there were a country made for an eating marathon, it's Thailand. On this private tour you'll eat street food in Bangkok, tour the markets of Chiang Mai with a chef and even try Thai wine at a vineyard northeast of the capital in the Khao Yai wilderness reserve. Besides the usual pad thai and boat noodles, you'll also get to try some of the country's more obscure offerings such as deep-fried crickets and even elephant dung coffee. One for the brave, perhaps. Accommodation is in boutique hotels such as Shanghai Mansion in Bangkok.

Details

Nine nights' half-board from £2,638pp, including flights and transfers (

ganeandmarshall.com

)

13. Lobster in Nova Scotia

Sure, the lobster shacks along the New England coast are charming. But there's a far more rustic feel over the border in Nova Scotia. Dig into a lobster roll in any of the booths by the sea or check out the Shore Club for a traditional lobster supper, where they're served with fresh mussels and little bowls of melted butter (£31;

shoreclub.ca

). You can even paddle out on a lobster-themed kayaking trip, where you'll watch the fishermen reel them in before tucking in at sunset (£255;

eastcoastoutfitters.com

). A fortnight's self-drive trip weaves all around the province.

Details

Thirteen nights' room only from £2,249pp, including flights and car hire (

canadiansky.co.uk

)

14. Eat your way round Sri Lanka

You're all but guaranteed amazing food wherever you are in

Sri Lanka

(hello, egg hoppers). But what's interesting is seeing how it varies between each region. From the seafood curries in west-coast Negombo to the pittu and dosa up in the northeast in Trincomalee, there are little twists and specialities wherever you go. This new Food Mapping holiday takes you to the lesser-travelled parts of the country and includes a private chauffeur-guide and experiences such as learning to make breadfruit curry and seeni sambol in a village home and separating rice from the paddy. You'll sleep in dreamy places such as Uga Jungle Beach, where luxe thatched cottages are dotted among the trees.

Details

Sixteen nights' half-board from £7,995pp, including flights and transfers (

srilanka-bespoke.com

)

15. Raclette in Verbier

Summer is a great time to visit Verbier — you can admire the mountain scenery and eat your bodyweight in melted cheese without all that skiing getting in the way. Locals claim that raclette was invented in this very spot, and you can learn how to make it in a workshop with expert Eddy Baillifard (£65;

verbier.ch

). Fifteen minutes' drive away, Sarreyer is home to the first Slow Food community in Switzerland, so you'll want to visit this villa for a taste of its small-batch chocolate and herby soft cheese, before carrying on down the valley to Val de Bagnes for its Valais charcuterie and dense rye bread. Stay in the cute, family-run chalet Hôtel A Lârze.

Details

B&B doubles from £114 (

alarze.ch

). Fly to Geneva

Sign up for our Times Travel newsletter Times Travel newsletter and follow us on Instagram Instagram and Twitter Twitter

Related Images



Iberico ham in San Sebastian, Spain



A selection of Spanish staples

GETTY IMAGES



The Chicago skyline



Riad Star in Marrakesh, Morocco



A feast of Norwegian delicacies



A vineyard near Santenay in the Burgundy region of France

ALAMY



Oranges and pomegranates in Sicily, Italy



Athens, Greece
ALAMY



The U-Bahn in Berlin, Germany
ALAMY



Evora, Portugal



Korcula old town, Croatia

GETTY IMAGES



Fruit and vegetables in Bologna, Italy

ALAMY



Bangkok, Thailand

ALAMY



Diners in Nova Scotia



Fishing boats in Negombo, Sri Lanka

ALAMY



Raclette is on the menu in Verbier

VERBIER.CH

Publisher: News UK & Ireland Ltd

Published Date: 26 Mar 2022 01:01:00

Article Id: 81521018 **Version:** 1

Word Count: 2133

Character Count: 9773



Reproduced by NLA media access with permission from the Publisher. May not be copied or otherwise reproduced without express permission.