



Savouring the British harvest season: autumn food and drink experiences

Britain's harvest season brings with it a wealth of culinary delights and gastronomic experiences, all set against a rich backdrop of autumnal hues. From food and drink festivals, to trails and tastings – visitors can celebrate the best of British produce alongside the best of what the season has to offer.



December 2024

Autumn food and drink festivals

Showcasing a range of artisan delicacies and local flavours, autumnal food and drink festivals offer visitors a chance to taste the freshest seasonal and regional produce. With events occurring across Britain, from Abergavenny to the Isles of Scilly, here's where to embark on a gastronomic journey this autumn.

The Steyning & District Food Festival, West Sussex, England, 6-15 September 2024

The [Steyning and District Food Festival](#) is a culinary event set in the picturesque West Sussex countryside. This annual festival brings together the best of the region's produce, with a focus on fresh ingredients and artisanal craftsmanship. Look out for the Farmers Market on 7 September, and for numerous exhibitions and events in the town and surrounding villages for the duration of the festival.

Ludlow Marches Food & Drink Festival, Shropshire, England, 13-15 September 2024

The [Ludlow Marches Food and Drink Festival](#), held in the historic market town of Ludlow, showcases the region's culinary heritage. Known for its rich array of local produce, artisan foods and craft beverages, the festival celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2024 and is a prime destination for foodies. With over 180 exhibitors and a great variety of gastronomic events including live demonstrations, workshops and talks, visitors can immerse themselves in the finest flavours of Shropshire and beyond.

Taste of Scilly Festival, Isles of Scilly, England, 12-22 September 2024

The [Taste of Scilly Festival](#) is a culinary event set against the idyllic backdrop of the Isles of Scilly, an archipelago off the Cornish coast fringed by sandy beaches. Held annually, the festival showcases the best of local produce, including fresh seafood. Events include cooking demonstrations, tastings, and farmers' markets, allowing visitors to indulge in gourmet experiences while enjoying the islands' natural beauty.

Abergavenny Food Festival, Monmouthshire, Wales, 21-22 September 2024

The annual [Abergavenny Food Festival](#) is a major culinary event in Wales. Renowned for its vibrant atmosphere and diverse offerings, the festival brings top chefs, food producers, and passionate foodies to the historic market town for a weekend of gastronomic indulgence. Stroller Tickets provide access to all of the different market venues, housing around 190 exhibitors, as well as to demonstrations in the main Market Hall. Saturday evening features a night market, and a Party at the Castle event (both individually ticketed) involving food and live music in the grounds of Ludlow Castle. Numerous talks and tastings are also individually ticketed – topics include everything from royal recipes to butchery skills and the history of rum.

Portsmouth Vegan Food Festival, Hampshire, England, 21 September 2024

The [Portsmouth Vegan Food Festival](#) is dedicated to plant-based cuisine. Held annually in the coastal city of Portsmouth, this festival showcases an array of vegan fare, from innovative street food and decadent desserts to wholesome meals and artisanal products.

Broadstairs Food Festival, Kent, England, 27-29 September 2024

Set in the coastal town of Broadstairs, in Kent, this annual [food festival](#) showcases some of the finest produce, artisanal goods, and culinary talents from Kent and its neighbouring counties. Visitors can enjoy a variety of food stalls, cooking demonstrations and tastings, all while soaking in the charming seaside atmosphere.

Thame Food Festival, Thame, Oxfordshire, England, 28-29 September 2024

[The Thame Food Festival](#) takes place annually at Thame Showground in Aylesbury. This year's festival promises a vibrant mix of activities, alongside appearances by renowned chefs and bakers, including Great British Bake Off 2023 winner Matty Edgell. Visitors can expect a variety of live cooking demonstrations, alongside a programme of live music, children's activities and a dog show to ensure there is something for everyone.

Brecon Beacons Food Festival, Wales, 5 October 2024

Nestled in the heart of the [Brecon Beacons \(Bannau Brycheiniog\) National Park](#), the [Brecon Beacons Food Festival](#) offers a vibrant mix of fresh produce and artisanal treats. Visitors can enjoy the crisp autumn air and golden hues of the surrounding landscape while sampling food and drink from local producers. Numerous brewers and distilleries from South Wales are exhibiting, alongside those offering everything from fudge, truffles and donuts to honey, sauces and preservatives.

Food and drink trails and experiences

For those seeking a more immersive culinary experience, food and drink trails provide an exceptional way to discover regional specialities. Visitors can explore the secrets behind traditional British fare while sampling local produce, artisan cocktails and award-winning ciders, beers and spirits. For memorable experiences, guided food tours take visitors through bustling markets, hidden gourmet spots, and historic eateries, with the help of knowledgeable experts.

The Spirit Circle Tour, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Perfect for cocktail enthusiasts and those seeking a unique night out, the [Sensorium at The Spirit Circle](#) is an innovative drink experience in Belfast, offered by Taste and Tour. This immersive tasting event blends the art of mixology with sensory exploration. Participants are offered a variety of expertly crafted cocktails – each is paired with sensory elements to enhance the tasting experience and make it a multi-dimensional adventure.

The Taste of Kent (five-day tour), Kent, England

[The Taste of Kent tour](#) is a five-day culinary adventure through county known as the ‘Garden of England’. Highlights of this guided tour include visits to local vineyards and an oyster farm, forest bathing in ancient woodland, foraging along the Kent coast and a guided gin-making experience. The tour includes four overnight stays with dinner in traditional hotels.

Kent Electric Bike Tours, Kent, England

Ideal for both seasoned cyclists and beginners, these [self-guided tours](#) of the Kent countryside on hired electric bikes are a leisurely way to explore the region and its rich food and drink offerings. Each tour takes visitors through lush gardens, award-winning vineyards and historic villages with plenty of opportunities to stop at one of the region’s many characterful gastropubs to sample local food, wines and brews. Hire is available from Tuesday to Saturday, with most tour routes operating from Headcorn Aerodrome, south of Maidstone.

Cider sleepovers and cider cycling trails, Herefordshire, England

For a truly unique experience, visitors can book a ‘cider sleepover’ in one of Herefordshire’s orchards to experience the autumn colours and taste the region’s famous ciders. [Dragon Orchard Retreat](#) in Putley, close to the market town of Ledbury, is an orchard hideaway which offers glamping in yurts or self-catered accommodation. Activities like the Orchard Bathing experience and the Orchard Poetry Trail invite guests to leave their phones behind and re-connect with nature.

Alternatively, the [North Cider Circuit: The Newton Wonder](#) is a 49-mile loop that stretches through an undulating swathe of farmland, orchards and forested hills north of Hereford. Perfect for seasoned cyclists and cider aficionados alike, the route takes in charming hamlets and historic sites, while providing a chance to sample local ciders, perries and juices.

Foraging tours

Autumn is also a great time for foraging tours, as visitors can roam the countryside in search of wild mushrooms, berries and herbs under the guidance of knowledgeable foragers. Offered across Britain, these tours provide a hands-on experience in identifying and harvesting seasonal wild foods and teach about sustainable practices and the rich biodiversity of different regions.

Wild Food UK Tours, various UK locations

[Wild Food UK](#) offer foraging tours in multiple locations, including at Rush Farm (Worcestershire), the Pentland Hills in Penicuik (Edinburgh) and Hutton-in-the-Forest (Cumbria).

Forage London, New Forest and Dorset, England

[Forage London](#) offer mushroom foraging workshops and wild mushroom hunting tours in London, the New Forest and Dorset. Run by independent foraging teachers, these autumnal sessions look at how to make the most of nature.

Hunter Gather Cook, Firle, East Sussex, England

Based in Firle, East Sussex, [Hunter Gather Cook](#) is an outdoor culinary school and foraging company that combines the art of foraging, outdoor cooking, and bushcraft skills. Set against the backdrop of the South Downs National Park, courses and workshops teach visitors how to identify, forage and prepare wild ingredients, providing an immersive experience to reconnect with the origins of food.

Autumn tastings

From vineyard tours in the rolling hills of Kent and East Sussex to whisky tastings in the distilleries of Scotland, autumn offers a unique opportunity to savour the essence of Great Britain.

Wine Tours of Kent, England

[Wine Tours of Kent](#) offer a range of guided tours exploring the Kent countryside to discover some of England's award-winning vineyards and wineries. Tours include transport, vineyard, brewery and winery tours, tutored wine or beer tastings, and a pub lunch.

Penderyn Brecon Beacons Distillery, Wales

An [hour-long distillery tour](#) offers an overview of the history of Penderyn as well as whisky production processes. Visitors are able to visit the mill and see the mash tun and single copper pot stills, with each tour ending with a couple of tasters in the distillery's Tasting Bar.

Tinwood Estate, West Sussex, England

Found on the edge of the South Downs National Park, the [Tinwood Estate](#) in the heart of Sussex was established in 2007. Open all year round, visitors can sample different drinks in the tasting room, enjoy a vineyard tour and wine tasting or stay the night in one of the estate's luxury vineyard lodges.

Cotswolds Distillery, Cotswolds, England

One of the few distilleries producing both English whisky and gin, [Cotswolds Distillery](#) offers a range of experiences to suit lovers of both spirits, from tasting tours to Gin or Whisky Blending Masterclasses. Tours run daily, with masterclasses on selected days throughout the year.

Scotch Whisky Experience, Edinburgh, Scotland

The [Scotch Whisky Experience](#) can be found at the top of Edinburgh's Royal Mile, close to Edinburgh Castle. Here visitors can dive into guided tastings, exclusive distillery tours and expert-led workshops tailored to both novice drinkers and seasoned connoisseurs. Trace the journey of Scotch whisky and spy the Diageo Clave Vidiz Whisky Collection, where a striking set of nearly 3,400 bottles are displayed.

Scotbeer Tours, Edinburgh/Glasgow/Aberdeen, Scotland

[Scotbeer Tours](#) take visitors through Scotland's brewing past, from the 12th century through to today's craft beer renaissance. The experiences are based on collaborations with breweries, specialist bars and restaurants to deliver a variety of walking tours, tasting masterclasses, brewery tours and multi-stop bus itineraries.

Eat Walk - Food and Drink walking tours, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews, Scotland

Those overwhelmed by the great variety of bars and restaurants in Scotland's major cities can enjoy guided [Eat Walk Tours](#) tailor-made for each of Scotland's major foodie destinations: Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews. In small groups, participants delve deep into their chosen city's culinary heritage and make several food stops, including drink tastings.