



# a matter of taste

**Sarah Holt explores the options available for foodie groups.**

**G**eorge Bernard Shaw once said there is no love sincerer than the love of food. And if your group agrees, you'll want to take a look at our round-up of foodie experiences from across the UK and abroad.

For me, you've not truly visited a place until you've tried the local food. I've tucked into a waffle bigger than my head in Bruges, washed down fresh apple pie with a glass of calvados in Hornfleur and lapped up a plate of bragioli (Maltese beef olives) in Malta.

Going local hasn't always had a happy ending. The llama in Peru was a little too metallic tasting, the guinea pig in Bolivia looked a little bit too much like an old household pet of mine, and the ugali in Kenya tasted like soap. Still, I wouldn't go back and swap any of the above for a Subway.

Even though the UK gets a bad rap for its cuisine, the country is scattered with places to try regional specials. Eating a Sally Lun Bunn is a rite of passage in Bath, for example, and you should really try to sample an Oxford sausage (made from pork, veal, cloves, mace and sage) when you're in the city of dreaming spires.

Some of the UK's foodie offerings are more geared up for groups than others though. In certain parts of the country, you can make an entire day out of sampling the local food.

That's certainly the case in Leicestershire, where you can pair a visit to Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe with time at The Melton Cheeseboard. At the former, groups of 15 people at a time can watch a pork pie making demonstration, which includes a few fascinating facts, then tuck into a few samples. At the latter, parties of 12 to 15 at a time can listen to talks and take part in cheese tastings. If groups still have room later, they can head to Leicester's Golden Mile to eat a meal in one of the city's great eastern restaurants.



## ■ Trips for Foodies



Brogdale Collections is another attraction that can inform an entire day's itinerary. Located in Faversham, Kent, it's home to the National Fruit Collection – 4,000 varieties of fruit, including apples, plums and cherries. Orchard tours take place every day between March and October, during which groups can learn about fruit production. Special talks and tastings can also be arranged on request and there's a restaurant on site that serves everything from cream tea to sandwiches.

Cheese lovers should visit the Northumberland Cheese Company at the Cheese Farm in Blagdon. Group visits here can be tailored to suit specific needs, but generally include a dairy tour and cheese tasting experience, followed by lunch in the Cheese Loft Café.

In a similar neck of the woods is the Northumberland Sausage Company, which offers sausage making experience days. Two-hour workshops take place in the Sausology Centre at Brocksbushes Farm just outside of Hexham. During the workshop groups will learn what ingredients go in to a banger and get to make their own recipe sausage using everything from marmalade to haggis.

---

**Walk Eat Talk Eat itineraries can take in the street food scene in Shoreditch - where I can personally recommend the salt beef bagel.**

---

Groups who visit London on a regular basis might want to book onto a foodie walking tour with Walk Eat Talk Eat. The company takes parties around the lesser-known foodie spots of the capital. Itineraries can take in the street food scene in Shoreditch – where I can personally recommend the salt beef bagels in Brick Lane – or the tucked away foodie hotspots around Borough Market.



> Northumberland Cheese Company



> A beef bagel in Shoreditch.

Photo credit:  
[www.nigelnapphoto.co.uk](http://www.nigelnapphoto.co.uk)



> Deli produce by Macknade Fine Foods.



◀ If your group want to be plunged into 360 degrees of food, meanwhile, there are a number of large food halls around the country. Located in Faversham, Macknade Fine Foods is home to a deli, butchery, restaurant, bakery and a cheese counter with more than 150 different cheeses. Visiting groups can arrange private tutored tastings as well as group lunches or coffees and cakes.

At Ludlow Food Centre groups can watch artisan producers making items from pickles and bread to cheese and ice cream before sitting down to taste some of the products in the Ludlow Kitchen.

**Wickedly Welsh has its own café where you can try everything from chocolate kebabs to chocolate pizzas.**

Chocoholics like myself should plan a visit to Wickedly Welsh Chocolate Company into their schedule. Located in Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire, the family run chocolate factory offers private experiences for groups that can include chocolate making demonstrations, chocolate creation, and tasting and pairing sessions. The company also has its own café where you can try everything from chocolate kebabs to chocolate pizzas.

In Dorset and Wiltshire, meanwhile, groups can go truffle hunting with the English Truffle Company. Private groups can talk to the company about tailoring their experiences but options during a visit include an introductory talk on truffles, lunch, two hours' worth of truffle hunting, and afternoon tea including sampling of a truffle dish. ■



### *3 foods that you need to leave the UK to try*

**The ice cream potato, Idaho** - ice cream moulded to look like a baked potato and served with cream and chocolate.

**The original Cronut®, Dominique Ansel Bakery, New York** - a cross between a croissant and a doughnut.

**Sun eggs, Jutland, Denmark** - cured eggs served with Tabasco, oil and vinegar.