



AITO Inspiration – Gastronomic Getaways

5 July 2017

Tantalise your taste buds with these gastronomic holiday ideas from specialist members of The Association of Independent Tour Operators (www.aito.com), all of which involve tasty tours, culinary lessons and, of course, delicious dishes from around the world.

Learn how to create French cuisine in the company of a celebrity chef, discover the art of Swedish coffee brewing and feast on King Crab under the Northern Lights... plus much more. *Departures throughout 2017 and 2018.*

Departing in 2017

NEW: Food off the beaten track in unspoilt Tuscany – from £1,995 pp with Andante Travel

Featured in Andante Travel's range of new cultural tours for 2017. This is an off-the-beaten-track food and cultural tour of Northern Tuscany. Learn how to make a traditional Italian pie at an organic farm as well as *Testaroli* (the pasta-pancake hybrid) at a local farmhouse, see how local honey and olive oil are produced, and discover the importance of chestnuts when making the region's famous *Marocca di Casola* bread. **Departing 17 September 2017**, [Food Off the Beaten Track](#) costs from £1,995 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), five nights' hotel accommodation, all meals, wine with dinner, a guide lecturer and tour manager. For details call Andante Travels on 01722 713800 (www.andantetravel.co.uk).

NEW: Celebrity cooking experience in La Vendée – from £1,565 pp with Artisan Travel

Join Scottish celebrity chef, Mark Greenaway, on a divine culinary journey in the stunning region of La Vendée, France. Mark – a renowned chef and restaurateur who has received a number of awards and accolades – will spend three days providing expert culinary tuition. Guests will enjoy a full-day masterclass at the stunning outdoor kitchen, amidst the tranquil gardens of the farmhouse accommodation, with a delicious lunch and dinner included.

Departing 22 September 2017, the [Mark Greenaway Masterclass](#) costs from £1,565 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), three nights' full-board accommodation, activities, transfers and a signed cookbook. Call Artisan Travel on 01670 785 085 (www.artisantravel.co.uk).

NEW: Wild Atlantic Way food trail – from £1,100 pp with McKinlay Kidd

With 2,500km of superb driving roads amidst awe-inspiring scenery, Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way is one of the must-do trails in Europe. This new eight-night self-drive holiday allows guests to enjoy the region's fabulous food and charming accommodation, from Cork through

to County Clare. Join a tasting tour in one of the top foodie destinations in Ireland, Kinsale, plus a full-day unique seaweed trail at Derrynane and a walking tour around the mysterious Burren. **Departing between now and October 2017**, [Wild Atlantic Way Food Trail](#) costs from £1,100 pp (two sharing), including eight nights' B&B in hand-picked guest houses and small hotels, and excursions as described. Ferries or flights to Ireland extra. Call McKinlay Kidd on 0141 308 8009 (www.mckinlaykidd.com).

NEW: Sample the wine, cuisine and culture of Crete – from £1,225 pp with Travel Editions

This wonderful new tour invites a maximum of 15 people to explore the gastronomic culture of Crete in the company of longstanding guides and taverna owners, Stelios and Angela. Throughout the week, Stelios' love of his island and its food, wine and culture will be evident as he shares his skills in a relaxed, informative and entertaining fashion. All food is of high quality and is locally sourced, with an excellent variety of dishes on offer for guests to sample. **Departing 26 September 2017**, [Culinary Crete](#) costs from £1,225 pp (two sharing), including flights (Gatwick), seven nights' B&B, four dinners, five lunches, transfers and the services of tour guides. Call Travel Editions on 020 7251 0045 (www.traveleditions.co.uk).

Discover the taste of Tuscany on an active family holiday – from £590 pp with Activities Abroad

Get a taste for authentic Italian cuisine on an active family adventure, based in the hills of rustic Tuscany. Children will love making pizza outdoors and adults can sample local wine after enjoying family activities including rock climbing, a cave-and-cascade adventure, canyoning and mountain biking. **Departing 22 & 29 July and 12 August 2017**, [A Taste of Tuscany](#) costs from £590 pp (children aged nine to 13 from £505 pp), based on two adults and one child sharing, including seven nights' accommodation, a welcome food pack, two lunches (with activities), three dinners, and the services of local representatives. Flights and guided activities extra. Call Activities Abroad on 01670 789 991 (www.activitiesabroad.com).

Tuck into Turkish Cuisine Week – from £1,125 pp with Cachet Travel

Recreate some of Turkey's favourite dishes in an authentic setting based at Cachet Travel's Mandarin & Mango Boutique Hotels in rural south-west Turkey. During the week, enjoy five practical demonstrations led by the hotel's chef, as well as three guided half-day excursions, including a trip to Fethiye's bustling market, a walk in the local countryside foraging for wild herbs and a visit to a traditional Turkish pancake house in the atmospheric Kaya Valley. **Departing 18 September 2017**, [Turkish Cuisine Week](#) costs from £1,125 pp (two sharing), including flights (Gatwick), half-board accommodation, transfers, workshops and excursions. Regional flights available for supplement. Call Cachet Travel on 020 8847 8700 (www.cachet-travel.co.uk).

Learn to cook like a local in the High Alpujarras, Andalucía – from £1,285 pp with Chapters Holidays

Discover Andalucía's lesser-known rural region, the High Alpujarras, on this seven-night holiday. Enjoy foraging walks, paella demonstrations with local chefs, a walk around Almeria market, a wine tour of an award-winning *bodega*, visits to a local cheese producer and olive oil mill, and more. Stay at the delightfully quirky Las Chimineas – a collection of rustic village houses with their own organic farm. **Departing between now and 14 October 2017**, [Insight to the High Alpujarras](#) costs from £1,285 pp (two sharing), including flights, transfers, half-

board accommodation with picnic or tapas lunches and local transport. Call Chapters Experience Holidays on 01707 246 666 (www.chaptersholidays.co.uk).

Sweden: ICEHOTEL® culinary adventure – from £1,340 pp with Discover the World

This culinary adventure, based at the ICEHOTEL®, reveals some of the best gastronomic experiences in Swedish Lapland. Highlights include learning the art of authentic Kokkaffe coffee brewing, foraging for food on a winter survival course and sampling the flavours of the north during a star-lit dinner, whilst enjoying the art and design of the magnificent ICEHOTEL®. **Departing between December 2017 and April 2018**, [ICEHOTEL® Culinary Adventure](#) costs from £1,340 pp (two sharing), including direct flights (Heathrow), two nights in a warm Kaamos Room, one night in an Ice Room, Winter Survival Introduction and Starlit Dinner at the Wilderness Camp. Call Discover the World on 01737 218 802 (www.discover-the-world.co.uk).

Traditions, food and wine in Argentina and Chile – from £4,695 pp with Geodyssey

Sample world-class wines, admire beautiful scenery and explore exciting cities on this 15-night tailor-made holiday to Argentina and Chile. Taste award-winning Chilean wine – listed as second-best in the 2016 James Suckling list – at renowned vineyards, from Mendoza city to the Colchagua Wine Valley, experience a traditional Argentinean *Asado* (barbecue) and try Chile's delicious seafood in between city tours and coastal town visits. **Departing throughout the year**, [Traditions, Food and Wine](#) costs from £4,695 pp (two sharing), including 15 nights' hotel accommodation, most meals, excursions as described, transfers and internal flights. International flights extra. Call Geodyssey on 020 7281 7788 (www.geodyssey.co.uk).

For fans of fizz, cycle through Catalonia's Cava country – from £795 pp with Intravel

Ride through the rolling vineyards of Penedès, an hour south-west of Barcelona, and visit not only world-famous wineries, including Condoníu and Freixenet, but also family-run wineries where bottles are still painstakingly turned by hand. Cycle along country roads, dirt tracks and through vineyards between three high-quality country hotels with pools (luggage is taken on ahead). Finish in Sant Sadurní d'Anoia, where the first bottle of Cava was produced in 1872. **Departing between now and 31 October 2017**, [Catalonia's Cava Country](#) costs from £795 pp (two sharing), including six nights' half-board accommodation, luggage transfers, route notes and maps, and bike hire. Call Intravel on 01653 617 000 (Intravel.co.uk).

Gastronomic gliding on a luxury barge, Paris and Burgundy – from £3,698 pp with Kirker Holidays

Experience the gastronomic delights of France's Burgundy region on a luxury barge, meandering past historic towns, pretty villages and verdant vineyards, with a two-night stay in Paris. Sample regional wines and locally-sourced cuisine prepared by the on-board chefs, and enjoy excursions including a cellar visit in Chablis, tasting the famous Petit Chablis and Chablis whites. **Departing between now and October 2017**, this [tailor-made itinerary](#) costs from £3,698 pp (two sharing), including return Eurostar (or flights) to Paris, two nights' B&B at four-star Hotel Westminster, a two-day Paris Museum Pass, a six-night cruise on the Nivernais Canal between Auxerre and Chevroches, with all meals, drinks and excursions, plus transfers and Kirker Guide Notes and Concierge Service. Call Kirker Holidays on 020 7593 2283 (www.kirkerholidays.com).

Easy walking and plenty of scoffing in Slovenia – from £655 pp with On Foot Holidays

Guests on this [walking adventure](#) stay on working farms and enjoy delicious Slovenian delicacies. While most walking companies concentrate on Slovenia's Julian Alps, this trip takes travellers via the little-known Karst, a much flatter and tourist-free area of vineyards, woods, villages, caves and rivers. Try the local *prsut* (cured ham), which tastes wonderful with the region's full-bodied red *teran* wine. Other culinary delights include hearty rabbit stew and delectable honey ice cream. The walk concludes in the lively Italian seaport of Trieste. **Departing throughout the year**, six nights' B&B cost from £655 pp (two sharing), including four picnics, two evening meals, luggage transfers and route information. Travel extra. Call On Foot Holidays on 01722 322652 (www.onfootholidays.co.uk).

A Gastronomic Tour of Sicily, Italy – from £3,375 pp with Peter Sommer Travels

Food lovers with a taste for Italian culture and history will delight in this escorted tour of Eastern Sicily. Catering to a maximum of 10 guests, enjoy tasty meals and cookery demonstrations at restaurants. Aromatic tours of herb and olive farms will inspire cooks and gardeners alike, while expert-led visits to Baroque towns and UNESCO World Heritage sites will reveal Sicily's diverse landscapes and highlight its fascinating past. **Departing 23 September 2017**, [A Gastronomic Tour of Sicily](#) costs from £3,375 pp (two sharing), including seven nights' B&B, six lunches, three dinners, crew services, land excursions and airport transfers. Flights extra. Call Peter Sommer Travels on 01600 888 220 (www.petersommer.com).

Prague, Vienna And Budapest – Europe's Imperial capitals – from £1,998 pp with Traveleyes

Traveleyes runs group tours for equal numbers of blind and fully-sighted travellers. Sighted travellers simply describe the sights to a different blind partner each day and, in return, receive up to 50% off their holiday cost. This trip takes in the culinary delights of three vibrant European capitals: Try traditional Czech beer in a Prague micro-brewery, enjoy wine tastings and a visit to the Central Market in Budapest, and sample traditional Austrian meats and *Apfelstrudel* in Vienna. **Departing 30 September**, [Grand tour through Europe](#) costs from £1,998 pp (or from £999 pp at the discounted price), two sharing, including flights (Gatwick), B&B, two lunches, excursions, transfers, the services of local guides and a Traveleyes tour manager. Call Traveleyes on 0113 887 4275 (www.traveleyes-international.com).

West Highland Way Food Guide holds the key to a hiker's heart – from £1,375 pp with Wilderness Scotland

Wilderness Scotland knows that refuelling is essential to a good day's walking and so has launched the first-ever interactive 'Food Guide to the West Highland Way' on its website. This innovative resource demonstrates how to get off the beaten track while keeping great-quality Scottish sustenance firmly on track. Tackle this 96-mile trail over seven days with a group of likeminded people, learn about the area's history, legends, flora and fauna, with the knowledge and experience of an expert guide, and tuck in at the very best foodie destinations. **Departing 4 and 18 September 2017**, [The West Highland Way](#) costs from £1,375 pp (two sharing), including seven nights' B&B, most meals, transfers and services of a Wilderness Scotland guide. Call Wilderness Scotland on 01479 420 020 (wildernessscotland.com).

Departing in 2018

NEW: Discover the taste of Italy's Le Marche region – from £3,180pp with Martin Randall Travel

Led by Marc Millon, author of *The Food Lover's Companion to Italy*, this new tour for 2018 combines country walks and the little-known gastronomic delights of the unspoilt region of Le Marche, Italy. Walks across mountains and plains in search of truffles will work up an appetite for tastings of traditional Marchegiano produce, including Pecorino cheese aged in wells, fennel-stuffed rabbit and freshly harvested mussels. Enjoy wine tastings at historic vineyards and lunch at the two Michelin-star Uliassi – one of the best restaurants in Italy.

Departing 17 September 2018, [Tastes of Le Marche](#) costs from £3,180 pp (two sharing), including flights (Heathrow), seven nights' hotel B&B, six lunches, four dinners with wine, all tips and taxes. Call Martin Randall Travel on 0208 742 3355 (martinrandall.com).

King Crab, Norwegian culinary delights and the Northern Lights – from £2,125 pp with The Aurora Zone

Combine the search for the Northern Lights with the wholesome flavours of Northern Norway. Kirkenes, known as the King Crab Capital of Europe and renowned for its Aurora record, is the perfect place for a Northern Lights inspired break. Gastronomic highlights include landing and feasting on the freshest King Crab in the wilderness, as well as enjoying a three-course evening meal at the Gabba restaurant, nearby to the Kirkenes Snowhotel.

Enjoy fantastic arctic pastimes such as snowmobiling and husky sledding. **Departing between 14 January and 18 March 2018**, [Kirkenes: Northern Lights Break](#) costs from £2,125 pp (two sharing), including flights (Heathrow), transfers, four nights' B&B, two lunches, two dinners, guided activities and cold weather clothing. Call The Aurora Zone on 01670 785 012 (www.theaurorazone.com).

Ends

Note to Editors:

AITO, www.aito.com, is an alliance of over 120 of the best specialist holiday companies. AITO members collectively provide an unrivalled range of holidays to every corner of the world. They are passionate about what they do and pride themselves on their attention to every detail of their customers' holidays.

AITO members' joint aim is to offer personal, caring service, to look after the environment in the places in which they work and to provide holidays that deliver both good value and high standards. All AITO holiday companies are required, as a condition of membership, to take full financial protection measures on behalf of their clients via the appropriate industry bonding schemes.

Recent additions to the AITO membership portfolio include:

- [All Saints Travel Ltd](#) – specialists in the arrangement of Christian pilgrimages for groups and individuals.
- [Chalfont Holidays](#) – creating bespoke holiday experiences for the discerning naturist traveller in resorts around the world.
- [Anzcro UK Ltd](#) – the experts for all holiday arrangements to New Zealand, Australia and the South Pacific.
- [Bamboo Travel](#) – creating tailor-made holidays in the Far East.
- [Silver Fern Holidays](#) – travel specialists with over 30 years' experience of creating dream holidays to New Zealand.
- [Personal Touch Holidays](#) – providing tailor-made group travel through highly-personalised service.
- [Travel Editions](#) – offering cultural and escorted tours to discerning travellers for over 23 years.

Travel PR will happily email all AITO members with any queries that travel writers may have – it's a great way to receive speedy feedback or information from AITO experts via just one email request.

For further information on AITO, please contact [Travel PR](#) on 020 8891 4440 or email Sue Ockwell (s.ockwell@travelpr.co.uk) or Rebecca Milne (r.milne@travelpr.co.uk).

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