

THE BMW 1 SERIES
GOOD FOOD RIDE
101 GREAT BRITISH FOOD ADVENTURES
NORTHERN IRELAND

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NORTHERN IRELAND

007 THE MOST ATMOSPHERIC MARKET

St George's Market

Oxford Street, Belfast BT1

Renovated in 1997 with a huge injection of funding from Belfast City Council, this beautiful Victorian marketplace, established in 1890, has become the venue for events as diverse as boxing matches and antiques fairs. However it is the Friday Variety Market, when 23 fish merchants from Ardglass, Portavogie and Killeel come to town, for which the venue is best known. From 6am until lunchtime 250 traders, cheek by jowl, hustle with thousands of customers from nearby houses, city offices and the law courts, selling everything from shoelaces and tea towels to brill and turbot.

On Saturdays (10am – 4pm) when the farmers' market takes place, there's a more relaxed ambience. Shoppers are less concerned about a bargain and more interested in buying something delicious from a truly mouthwatering selection of fresh and artisan produce. You can spend the entire day grazing, from a morning cappuccino and a crepe through to a lunch of freshly made pasta, with a sauce of, say, mushrooms and mascarpone, while taking in the jazz or big-band sounds. In

true Northern Irish tradition, you'll never be short of a "wee bun", or something fried. However this market is for serious shoppers too. Producers from the four corners of Northern Ireland gather here, so you can buy: heather honey from the Mourne; organic, free-range chicken, eggs, and lamb from Limavady; and thirst-quenching apple and berry juices or prize-winning bacon, wild boar sausages and Galloway beef from Armagh. The market is covered, so you won't get wet, and when the sun shines, shards of light beam through the glass ceilings setting off this rare architectural gem.

043 THE BEST CINNAMON SCONES

Bay Tree Coffee House

*118 High Street, Holywood,
Northern Ireland BT18 9HW
028 9042 1419
www.baytreeholywood.com*

If you need to practise your reversing skills down a tight alleyway, drive to the Bay Tree's courtyard car park at lunchtime. Everyone will be there before you. It's hard not to salivate when recalling past meals at the Bay Tree. Sue Farmer, a self-taught and experienced cook, has instinctively good taste, and a sure, practised hand. People go mad



for her cinnamon scones, swirls of caramelised, cakey sweetness, warmed and lashed with butter – or just as they are – delivered with a rich-roast cappuccino. They're now available in bags of a dozen for addicts. We are also drawn in by the savoury stuff, such as the super fresh fillets of haddock with parsley butter or boar and apple sausages – both served with excellent creamy mash. Or the Puy lentil salad, glistening with a good vinaigrette, served with mellow goats cheese and crunchy walnuts. Or a soulful main course soup with Farmer's own wheaten bread, and oh go on then, a platter of homemade pâté with some of that sticky onion marmalade, please. Then again you might have a sweet tooth which yearns for a piece of roulade, or duo of meringues – sandwiched with cream and forest fruits, or a slice of coffee cake, or a thick chunk of brownie, all displayed with tantalising, domestic goddess lavishness on the counter. Builders come here for their breakfast, which is always a good sign. Sadly Friday is the only evening they are open, but tea breaks and lunches are prime time at the Bay Tree. Art exhibitions and a brilliant crafts shop mean you will never leave empty-handed.

048 THE BEST PICK & PECK YOUR OWN

Millview Farm

33 Ballydrain Road, Comber,
County Down BT23 5SS
028 9187 2337

"The more time I spend in the fruit and vegetable business," says Anne Stone of Millview Farm, "the more I think back to our ancestors, the hunter-gatherers, who picked by eye on scrubby ground. We inherited that ability to choose the best and we've become so good at selecting one from the other that we do it instinctively. People choose the bigger head of broccoli or the peas with slightly more sheen, without even realising. It's an absolutely fundamental part to us being human." It's unsurprising then, given what Anne says, that hers is one of the busiest stands at St George's Market in Belfast and why so many people stop off at Millview to participate in a bit of "pick your own", or simply to buy

a dirty big bag of spuds. Her farm enjoys the unique microclimate that makes the northern shores of Strangford Lough – from Grey Abbey around to Killyleagh – particularly sunny and dry, and suitable for soft fruits. The clay-rich loam, excellent for retaining precious water and nutrients, is also ideal for potatoes. In season, you'll also find chard, mangetout, sugar snaps, broad beans, peas, peppery white turnips, courgettes and corn on the cob. Tomatoes come in three varieties – all sweet and juicy, and, with six polytunnels, they can provide a year round supply of mouth-tingling salad leaves and herbs. The Millview Farm hens also enjoy a "peck-your-own" system. Free to roam the fields, with a diet of grass, clover – and believe it or not – slugs, beetles and worms, they produce the best, golden-yolked eggs ever. Just watch out for the bumpy drive.

056 THE BEST WEE BUN

Ditty's Home Bakery

42 Main Street, Castledawson,
Co Derry BT45 8AB
028 79468243

A third-generation, family-run home bakery, Ditty's steadfastly promotes Northern Ireland's unique breads, cakes and confectionery: fluffy white soda farls, earthy potato bread, buttermilk pancakes, fruity bracks and cakes, and a host of the sticky sweet "wee buns" so beloved in the region. While industrial bakers and supermarkets strive to prolong the shelf life of their products with preservatives and "improvers", Robert Ditty goes back to basics, sourcing better flour, sifting it three or four times, and using ingredients such as real – rather than cultured – buttermilk or extra egg yolks. The results? The very best traditional griddle and yeast breads you will find. But Ditty is also a pioneer, winning numerous accolades – and orders – for products such as his delicious oatcake range from purveyors of fine food such as Fortnum & Mason and Paxton & Whitfield. The original oatcake has a caramelised, just-baked crispness. Add to that ingredients such as dulce and sesame, crushed walnuts, and artisan-smoked oats and you have a winning hamper of gifts to take home.

062 THE FINEST KEBAB

The Harbour Bistro

*The Harbour, Portrush, Co. Antrim BT56 8BN
028 7082 2430*

The kebab is a much-maligned dish, often associated more with last orders at the bar than fine dining. However, thanks to George McAlpin and the team at his excellent diner in Portrush, the kebab is rightly making its way up to the top table. The excitement of his kebabs is not just in the clever combinations he grills over the hot coals but in their delivery and execution. All his kebabs are presented dramatically on a “hangman” plate designed specifically to hold the deliciously skewered dishes over the salads and breads below. This fantastical display transforms the humble kebab into a really rather special meal. Depending on the day, you can choose from kebabs such as “peppered rump steak with tobacco onions and pepper cream”, “Italian chicken kebab with wild mushrooms, white truffle mayo and pancetta” or “tiger prawn kebab with mango salad, sweet potato sauté and coconut sauce”. The far-reaching views from the Harbour Bistro are equally spectacular with the West Strand Beach stretching out beyond the promenade with its harbour and lifeboat. When Norman Cook is in town, and he is surprisingly often, this is where he orders a kebab, and we can see why.

063 THE BEST HOME-FROM-HOME

Anna's House

*35 Lisbarnett Road, Comber, Co Down BT23 6AW
028 9754 1566
www.annashouse.com*

Anna is from Poland, and loves to cook and garden. Ken is a retired captain of industry who sings in the Down Cathedral choir, and enjoys a good blether. Ken built the rather spectacular extension to their two-roomed cottage. Anna runs their B&B, which is why, we suppose, it's called Anna's House. By the time you leave it will feel like your house, your home from home in Northern Ireland. Nestled among the undulating countryside of County Down, overlooking a very pretty 10-acre lake, surrounded

by the results of Anna's green-fingered creativity, it's hard to think of a better place to be. Once you've taken your fill of the tranquillity offered by the secret pond, the hammock in the pine grove, or the immensely tall music room with its panoramic views of the Mourne Mountains, you'll be welcomed straight into the kitchen. And it's here you could quite happily stay, supping on tea or wine, while Anna bakes or cooks, and Ken pours. A very good family supper at the daintily laid dining-table makes up for a shortage of local restaurants, but breakfast is Anna's forte, and she goes to considerable lengths to make it special. Blackberries picked from the hedgerows or from her garden at the crack of dawn might accompany your yoghurt. Freshly nipped herbs such as dill and parsley will flavour a canary yellow omelette, bubbling in butter. Warm scones and breads, with homemade jams of course, are just out of the oven. And if you want a big fry with bacon, sausages and so on, it'll be full of rich natural flavours too. Every room has pretty views of the countryside, a bathroom and a TV. Every bed is made with real Irish linen. Every customer leaves relaxed and revitalised.

076 THE MOST EUROPEAN-FEELING

**NOMINATED BY RICHARD CORRIGAN,
CHEF AND RESTAURATEUR**

Cayenne

*7 Ascot House, Shaftesbury Square,
Belfast BT2 7DB*

028 9033 1532

www.rankingroup.co.uk/cayenne.php

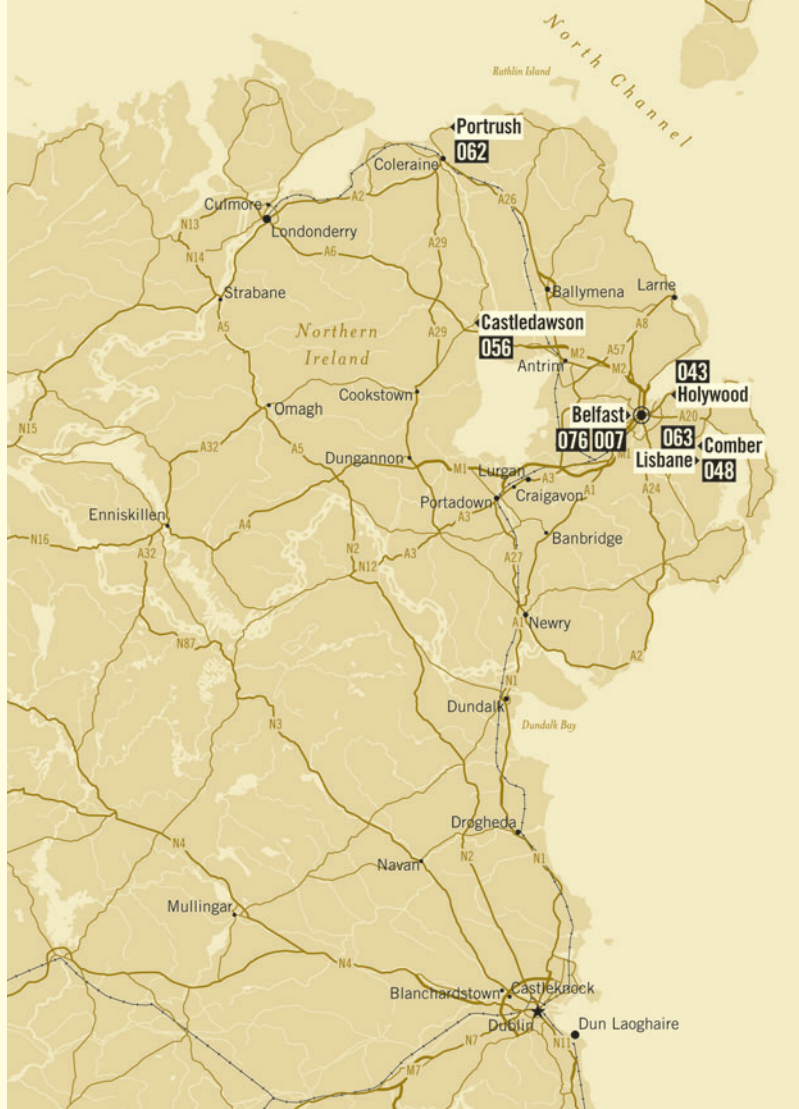
“Cayenne is a little oasis in Belfast. It's very cosmopolitan, very European and has a distinct, eclectic feel to it. Meeting and greeting is the order of the day at this restaurant. It actually reminds me of Stephen Bull, where I used to work in Soho for a few years, because it's full of media types along with all the movers and shakers of Belfast. More importantly, there is always something you want to eat on the menu – the fish by the way is beautiful. Cayenne is owned by the restaurateur Paul Rankin – a man who has his finger firmly on the food pulse. Hes not afraid to move with the times. When I first went there over three years ago it was more of a fine dining restaurant,

now it's moved away from that and has a more liberated, informal, feel to it.

Of course, Cayenne makes brilliant use all the fine fresh produce available in Northern Island, but the dishes also have Rankin's trademark international twists, which always work really well. It's a shame that there are not many high end restaurants in Belfast any more since a few had to close recently, but Cayenne has faired the weather and can constantly be relied on to supply excellent food at pretty competitive prices. If I lived in Belfast I'd be in there at least three times a week."

MAP 3 NORTHERN IRELAND

- 007 St George's Market, The most atmospheric market
- 043 Bay Tree Café, The best place for cinnamon scones
- 048 Millview Farm, The best pick & peck your own
- 056 Ditty's Home Bakery, The best wee bun
- 062 The Harbour Bistro, The finest kebab
- 063 Anna's House, The best home-from-home
- 076 Cayenne, The most European-feeling



TOUR 3

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland's reputation as a tourist destination and a gastronomic centre has grown rapidly over recent years with a renewed interest in the region's distinctive local food. This 80-mile route takes a sample of some innovative culinary experiences on the journey from the south east of Northern Ireland to the spectacular north coast.

We cannot resist suggesting you begin the night before, staying at **Anna's House**. This is a real treat with stunning surroundings and splendid lakeside accommodation – and the organic Ulster fry breakfast should set you up proudly for the day. From here take the road left into Lisbane, and turn left onto the A22 before turning quickly right. The next left should bring you to Ballydrain Road and **Millview Farm**. Here, you can pick up the finest quality organic berries, fruits, potatoes and eggs from the family run farm along the shores of the beautiful Strangford Lough.

Continue as the road twists back to the A22 and into Comber. The A22 carries on out of town and into Dundonald, on the outskirts of East Belfast. The road merges with the A20 heading directly for the city. Turn right onto the A55, the outer ring road, which then merges into the A2 for Holywood. On the High Street you'll find **The Bay Tree Coffee House**, a great place for lunch – don't forget to buy a bag of cinnamon scones to take with you.

Once back on the road, head towards Belfast centre along the A2, past the airport. Rejoin the A20 at the heart of the city and pick up the A23 heading out of town. **Aunt Sandra's Candy Factory** is situated on Castlereagh Road, not far from the city centre. Here since the 1950s, it is a local institution; Sandra herself is retired, but her famous honeycomb candy, traditional fudge and chocolate macaroon cake live on and you can see how they are all made on the

factory tour. All the candy is hand made to recipes that date back as far as 100 years, and there's plenty to take away from the 1950s style gift shop.

Head back once again to Belfast's centre and join the M2 motorway, sweeping around to junction 1, confusingly located just after junction 7. Here, take the A26 northwards, following signs for Coleraine. A separate portion of the M2 guides you round Ballymena, and the A26 continues around Ballymoney, then Coleraine a pleasant, University town on the River Bann. A short dash up the A29 brings you to the world famous Causeway Coast and Portrush. Here you will find two long sandy beaches, backed by dunes and Royal Portrush Golf Links, one of the most challenging in Northern Ireland. You might like to walk along the beach, or venture along the A2 to gaze in awe at the incredible igneous extrusion that is the Giant's Causeway. Either way, **The Harbour Bistro**, a bustling, innovative establishment on the harbour in Portrush makes a perfect place to round the day off with dinner.

This drive has been created in association with Caroline Workman and Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle. Caroline is a food writer and Fionnuala works at the Taste of Ulster.

Portrush
The Harbour Bistro

A29

Coleraine

Ballymena

A26

M2

M3

Holywood

The Bay Tree

Comber

A2

A55

A20

A23

Aunt Sandra's
Candy Factory

A22

Lisbane

Anna's House

BEST BRITISH FOOD YOU'VE NEVER TASTED THE BEST FOR DRINKING
CHAMPAGNE BY THE RIVER THE MOST LITERARY CUP OF TEA THE GUEST-
FRIENDLIEST SERVICE THE TASTIEST KIPPER TEA THE BEST MODERN SEASIDE
EATING THE MOST ATMOSPHERIC MARKET THE MOST NOVEL FLAVOURS THE
BEST BACON SANDWICH THE TASTIEST SMOKEHOUSE THE MOST STYLISH ICE-
CREAM VANS THE MOST WELCOMING FIRE ON A COLD DAY THE BEST PASTRY
WITH A MOVIE ON THE SIDE THE BEST SOUTH EAST ASIAN THE BEST PLACE TO
EAT AT THE STREET THE BEST TRADITIONAL SEASIDE FISH AND CHIPS THE MOST
ENTERTAINING PROPRIETOR THE MOST ROCK 'N' ROLL BREAKFAST THE BEST
EAST THE YORKSHIREMAN'S YORKSHIRE PUDDING THE MOST SECRET RECIPE
THE BEST VIEWS THE MOST IDYLIC VEGETARIAN THE BEST HAGGIS THE
GREATEST AUTHORITY ON CHIPS THE BEST FOR ART THE MOST AUTHENTIC
SEAFOOD SHACK THE BEST CARIBBEAN THE MOST QUINTESSENTIALLY ENGLISH
TEASHOP THE CHEFS' FAVOURITE GARDEN THE CHOICE OF CHOCOHOLICS
THE MOST INTERESTING SALAD THE WILDEST WEEKEND THE BEST FOR EAVES-
DROPPING THE MOST REMOTE THE BEST VILLAGE SHOP THE BEST PLACE FOR A
CLEAN WEEKEND THE MOST FABULOUS CANAPÉS THE BEST DESIGNED THE
MOST DEDICATED APIARIST THE MOST AUTHENTIC COUNTRY MANSION THE
BEST SUNDAY LUNCH THE BEST CINNAMON SCONES THE BEST DRIVE THE BEST
PLACE TO MEET A FUTURE STAR CHEF THE BEST VEGETABLES AS DESSERT THE
MOST CORNISH CORNISH PASTY THE BEST PICK & PECK YOUR OWN THE BEST
DADSIDE DINING THE CONNOISSEUR'S CAFE THE ECO-FRIENDLIEST LUNCH
THE BEST CABBIE'S CURRY THE BEST DIM SUM THE MOST PICNIC-FRIENDLY
DELI THE MOST SPECTACULAR INSIDE-OUT EXPERIENCE THE BEST WEE BU
THE FASTEST GRAIN-TO-LOAF BREAD THE GORIEST HISTORY THE BEST HISTORICAL
SETTING THE MOST WONDERFUL LUNCHTIME BOWL OF SOUP THE FARM-
FRESH ST FARM SHOP THE FINEST KEBAB THE BEST HOME FROM HOME THE BEST
RIVERSIDE HIDEAWAY THE BEST OYSTERS THE BEST DESSERT THE MOST
WILD AND WONDERFUL SEAFOOD THE MOST ENERGETIC LUNCH THE MOST
IDYLIC PICK-YOUR-OWN THE MOST ORIGINAL FOOD-AND-SPORT COMBINATION
ON THE PERFECT SWEETSHOP THE LOUDEST ITALIANS THE LONGEST DINNER
THE BEST ICE-CREAM PARLOUR THE BEST POST-DINNER COFFEE THE MOST
EUROPEAN-FEELING THE BEST MARKET DINING THE MOST DELECTABLE PLACE
FOR A FIRST DATE THE QUAINTEST NOOK-AND-CRANNY-FILLED BOOKSHOP
CAFÉ THE BEST CLASSIC-WITH-A-TWIST THE BEST FOR KIDS THE PLACE THAT
CHEESE-LOVERS ALWAYS DREAMED OF THE MOST SUMPTUOUS AND GENUINE
FARMHOUSE TEA THE BEST HUNG CEILING THE BEST FRUIT JUICE THE BEST TO
ARRIVE AT BY BOAT THE BEST CHEF-GARDENER THE MOST SENSORILY STUNNING
DELICIOUS DELI THE MOST THEATRICAL CHEF'S TABLE DINING THE BEST FARMERS'
MARKET THE BEST RESTAURANT TO FLY INTO THE MOST WILD AND WIND-
WEPT THE BEST KEPT SECRET IN SEAFOOD THE MOST ROMANTIC THE MEAT
LOVER'S BEST FOOTBALL PIES THE BEST FOR A POST-DINNER WALK THE BEST PLACE TO
BUY FISH FROM FISHERMEN THE JOLLIEST FOOD FESTIVAL THE BEST AT
CHRISTMAS POSSIBLY THE FINEST VEGETABLES ON THE PLANET THE ONE