

THE BMW 1 SERIES
GOOD FOOD RIDE
101 GREAT BRITISH FOOD ADVENTURES
SCOTLAND

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SCOTLAND

021 THE BEST VIEWS

Badachro Inn

Gairloch, Ross-shire IV21 2AA

01445 741255

www.badachroinn.com

Although gastro-pubs have become a permanent fixture in Britain's culinary landscape, their spread has been relatively slow in Scotland; of the 525 pubs and inns in the UK and Ireland recommended in the current Michelin's *Eating Out in Pubs* guide, just 26 are north of the border. One of the chosen few is the Badachro Inn, on the south side of Loch Gairloch in the Highlands, which, commanding wonderful vistas over the loch and the surrounding mountains even out as far as Skye and the Outer Hebrides, must surely be the best positioned for views in the UK. It is also perfect for hikers, golfers and boating folk, but the standard of food is in itself enough to justify the long trek and a night's stay in nearby bed and breakfast accommodation. The food is local, fresh and simply done – prawns and salmon are delivered daily by local fishermen and the bar stocks the largest selection of whiskies in the area. For balmy days, the garden has unbeatable views over the bay and during the colder months, the bar is welcoming and cosy with low ceilings, original beams and a roaring fire to huddle by.

024 THE BEST HAGGIS

George Cockburn & Son

19 Mill Street, Dingwall

Inverness-shire IV15 9PZ

01349 862315

Its champion haggis-making skills have gained it world recognition – even Madonna decided to serve Cockburn's haggis at her wedding – yet at first glance there is little to mark out George

Cockburn & Son's shop as a global centre for this Scottish delicacy. Behind the scenes at this rather unassuming butcher's on Dingwall's high street, nearly 2,000 award-winning haggis are hand-mixed each week. According to joint owner Fraser MacGregor, this hands-on approach is the main reason for the popularity of his haggis, made from a recipe (a secret combination of lamb, suet, oatmeal and onions) that is as old as the shop, which was established in 1955. Some rival brands may sell more, but they tend to be mass-manufactured in a more mechanical way, without this personal touch. At Cockburn & Son, someone still ties each haggis – and that's a lot of knots. In recent years it has introduced haggis pie, which has proved exceedingly popular with modern types who like to eat on the run, and is great eaten cold as part of a picnic. MacGregor says he still prefers to eat his haggis served simply on toast for breakfast or with a whisky sauce of cream, onions and a wee dram. Cockburn was the first Champion Haggis Maker and is still very much a winner today.

035 THE MOST REMOTE

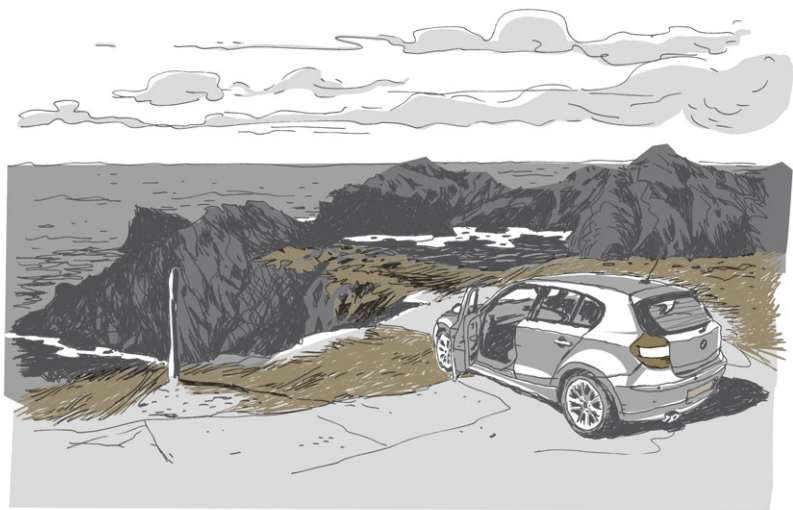
Bonaventure

Aird Uig, Isle of Lewis HS2 9JA

01851 672474

www.bonaventurelewis.co.uk

A visit to Bonaventure requires a certain level of dedication. Housed in a prefab on a former RAF base at the most westerly point of the UK, it feels not so much in the middle of nowhere as on the outer edges. However, a dedicated band of fans, including many politicians and celebrities, travel here repeatedly for the food. Opened seven years ago by a husband-and-wife team, Bonaventure has a reputation for fusing the fruits of Scotland with a French influence. Jo-Ann Leparoux handles front of



Aird Uig

house while her French husband Richard cooks up dishes celebrating Scottish beef, venison and fresh seafood. A typical dish might include a haggis-stuffed crepe with sweet chilli sauce, or smoked duck with raspberry dressing. Desserts include profiteroles, pear poached with red wine, and banana flambéed in rum with homemade toffee ice-cream – described by one critic as “sobbingly great”. The restaurant has spectacular views of the Atlantic and a number of rooms, making the pilgrimage a more manageable endeavour.

049 THE BEST ROADSIDE DINING

The Real Food Café

*Main Street, Tyndrum, Scotland FK20 8RY
01838 400235
www.therealfoodcafe.com*

Let's be frank, any British person with taste buds knows that breaking off from a drive for a roadside snack can be one of the most depressing eating experiences known to man. True, some service station buildings have a certain charm about them, but the food within is invariably tasteless and priced so that you wonder if the decimal point is in the wrong place. However, a few brave food heroes have recently set out to challenge the status

quo: the independently owned Tebay Services on the M6 in Westmoreland; Farm café on the A12 at Marlesford in Suffolk; and, perhaps the figurehead of this minor movement, Sarah Heward's Real Food Café. The café was a Little Chef when Sarah bought it with her late husband Steve, but they gave it a thorough revamp. Gone are the moulded plastic chairs and tables – The Real Food Café now features chunky pine benches and high stools, positioned to encourage a communal feel and to make the most of the rugged countryside that lies beyond the vast windows. There is a relaxed feel which lets visitors feel welcome, from the hikers and bikers (there is no carpet so muddy boots are not a problem) to those on long car journeys stopping for a break. But the food – they try to source all their ingredients in Scotland – is gaining such a good reputation that it is becoming a destination rather than just a stop-off. The café's award winning fish and chips are extremely popular. The rest of the menu is equally unfussy and is dominated by hearty fare such as burgers, shepherd's pie, stew and dumplings, and desserts such as crumble and custard. Positioned at the gateway to the Highlands, the Real Food Café is excellently placed. As someone once said, “It's in the middle of nowhere but on the way to everywhere.”

067 THE MOST WEIRD AND WONDERFUL SEAFOOD

Creelers

Home Farm, Brodick, Isle of Arran KA27 8DD
01770 302797
www.creelers.co.uk



Edinburghians are familiar with the enterprising James family from their restaurant on Hunter Square, but this is the original smokehouse and bistro, set in the old byre of Castle Brodick's Home Farm. It is a mecca for lovers of unusual seafood, for the James's own fishing boat catches all manner of fish and crustacea not available in town. As well as the delicious squat lobster, spider and velvet crabs, there are surf clams, clappy doos (a sort of horse mussel), palourdes, winkles and creatures that are "So repulsive to look at", owner Tim James can't even put a name to them. Still, they all go down nicely on the seafood platters with a glass of chilled white wine and lots of smoked fish from Creelers Smokehouse. Just 50 yards from the sea, the whole enterprise has a jolly, holiday atmosphere, with lots of families (main entertainment for kids – the shop's live lobster tanks) tucking into the famous fish soup. The old dairy next door is now home to Arran Aromatics, and a cheese shop sells some handmade products. For an even more rural experience, take directions here for the Seafood Cabin at Skipness (ferry from Loch Ranza to Cloanig), where Tim's sister Sophie James serves basic seafood from Whitsun until the end of September (open 11am–6pm). There are stunning views from the ruins of the old castle there, and guests sit outside (with the chickens and the sheep) eating crabs or homemade cakes and scones. Don't turn up earlier than Whitsun, however – the Jameses will be too busy lambing and you'll get no tea.

084 THE BEST HUNG CEILING

Valvona & Crolla

19 Elm Row, Edinburgh EH7 4AA
0131 556 6066
www.valvonacrolla.com

There is nothing quite so cheering, cosy and reassuring when entering a deli or café as a ceiling hung with hams, vegetables and cheeses. Full shelves, well-stocked gondolas and piled-high glass counters can do a lot for a foodie's spirit, but the implication that your host has so much to offer that he or she has had to resort to using the ceiling – well, that's something else, especially if it's properly crowded. The ceiling at Valvona & Crolla, an Edinburgh institution that has been in the Contini family for generations, is as good as they get, jam-packed with sliceable Italian delicacies and complementing the crammed shelves in the fantastic deli that stocks premium Italian and Scottish artisanal products. At the rear lies the most endearing dining venue in the city, a simple restaurant that offers all-day menus of classic, rustic Italian fare. Meals are invariably excellent, and – although it seems almost churlish to say so when there is so much good cooking here – the chewy, thin-crust pizzas with fresh-tasting tomato sauce and creamy mozzarella have a good claim to be the best in the UK. One suspects that if V&C were in London, it may well have been acclaimed as such. The Italian-Scottish strain of cooking north of the border is an important and significant part of modern Scots culture – this is the best place to begin an exploration of it. There is also now a Valvona & Crolla's VinCaffè at 11 Multrees Walk, but for an introduction, the old classic is best.

086 THE BEST TO ARRIVE AT BY BOAT

The Royal Hotel

Shore Road, Tighnabruaich, Argyll PA21 2BE
01700 811239
www.royalhotel.org.uk

Who needs the Med when you can sail your yacht straight up the Kyles of Bute – a narrow inland loch full of tiny islands, framed by typical West Coast hillsides covered in gorgeous shades of tree-green

and rhododendrons? Your dining goal here would be the Royal at Tighnabruaich (pronounced tyner-brew-ick), the much-esteemed private hotel run by two generations of the McKie family. Moor your vessel, then tie up your tender to the pontoon for a sense of anticipated reward after a waterborne adventure – or if you are not a sailor, take the 20 minute ferry from Gourock to Dunoon for a similar romantic thrill. Then sit on the terrace and watch the porpoises and wading birds over a drink before dinner. Staying overnight is an option if the hotel's huge collection of fine malt whiskies is too tempting for the (wonderfully scenic) hour-and-a-half drive back to Glasgow. Tighnabruaich itself is a Victorian fishing village overlooking the Kyles of Bute, a narrow waterway between the Island of Bute and the mainland. Fishermen and walkers work up an appetite for chef Louise McKie's monkfish wrapped in home-cured bacon and served in a Bloody Mary sauce made with Scottish vodka. Other locals are part of the experience: langoustines are caught by Arthur; scallops are hand-dived by his sister Mary, an ex-snowboarding champion; and venison is supplied by stalker Winston Churchill of Dunoon. It's a hive of industry, then – but the only sounds are those of the waves and seabirds.

and served with tamarind sauce and warm oatmeal bread. There is something impressively unapologetic about the Summer Isles Hotel, not least the fact that it closes for five months of the year and is a two-hour drive from the nearest airport. Its appeal, however, is summed up by the no-nonsense owners when they say “there is a marvellous amount of nothing to do”; but then with exquisite food, comfy beds and breathtakingly beautiful scenery, who needs a distraction?

094 THE MOST ROMANTIC

Summer Isles Hotel

Achiltibuie, Ross-shire IV26 2YG

01854 622282

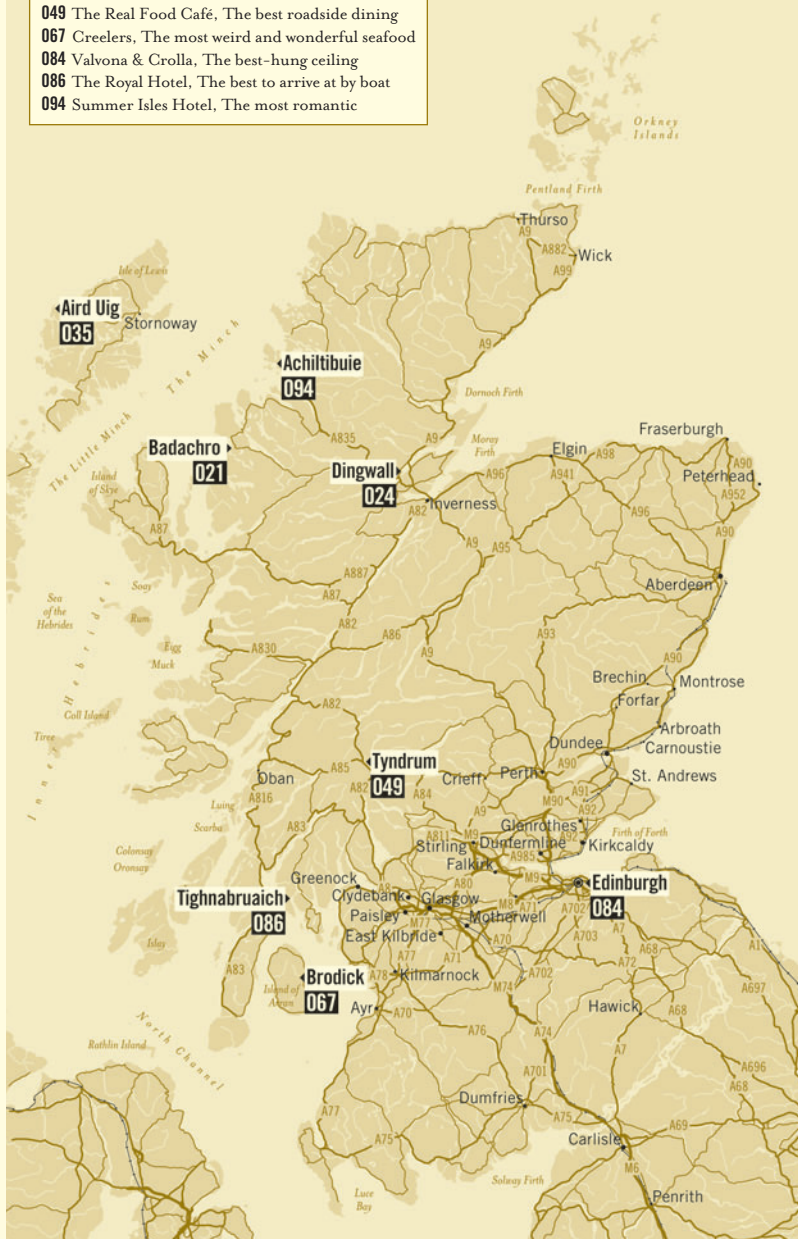
www.summerisleshotel.co.uk

The Summer Isles Hotel's location high in the Scottish Highlands makes the journey there a labour of love. The hotel scores highly on aphrodisiacs with dramatic views, an abundance of fresh seafood and elegantly decorated accommodation that includes a converted boathouse and a luxurious log-house suite. The chef is a former winner of Scottish Chef of the Year and offers a five-course set meal each evening at 8pm on the dot. Ingredients are rarely anything other than homemade or locally harvested and include such treats as grilled fillet of Lochinver halibut with local mussels steamed in saffron and white wine, or monkfish wrapped in a filo pastry parcel

MAP 1 SCOTLAND

- 021 Badachro Inn, The best views
- 024 George Cockburn & Son, The best haggis
- 035 Bonaventure, The best remote
- 049 The Real Food Café, The best roadside dining
- 067 Creelers, The most weird and wonderful seafood
- 084 Valvona & Crolla, The best-hung ceiling
- 086 The Royal Hotel, The best to arrive at by boat
- 094 Summer Isles Hotel, The most romantic

Fair Isle



TOUR 1 SCOTLAND

This coast-to-coast culinary adventure takes in some of the best of the Highlands, from the city of Inverness, and the handsome fishing town of Ullapool to a staggering drive through the glacial landscape of mountains and lochs that lies between. It may be a stretch to complete the journey in one day but would provide the framework for a wonderful weekend jaunt.

Begin from Inverness, and if you need sustenance before you set out, try the **Castle Restaurant** (41 Castle Street, Inverness, Inverness-Shire IV2 3DU; 01463 230925) overlooking (yes, you guessed) Inverness Castle. Joining the A9 heading for Perth/Ullapool, cross the grand Kessock Bridge over the Beaully Firth, and at Tore, take a left onto the A835 towards Ullapool. Take the third exit at the roundabout, signposted as the A862 to Wick, and visit Dingwall – a small town that is the birthplace of Macbeth, and home to **George Cockburn & Son**, purveyors of award-winning haggis.

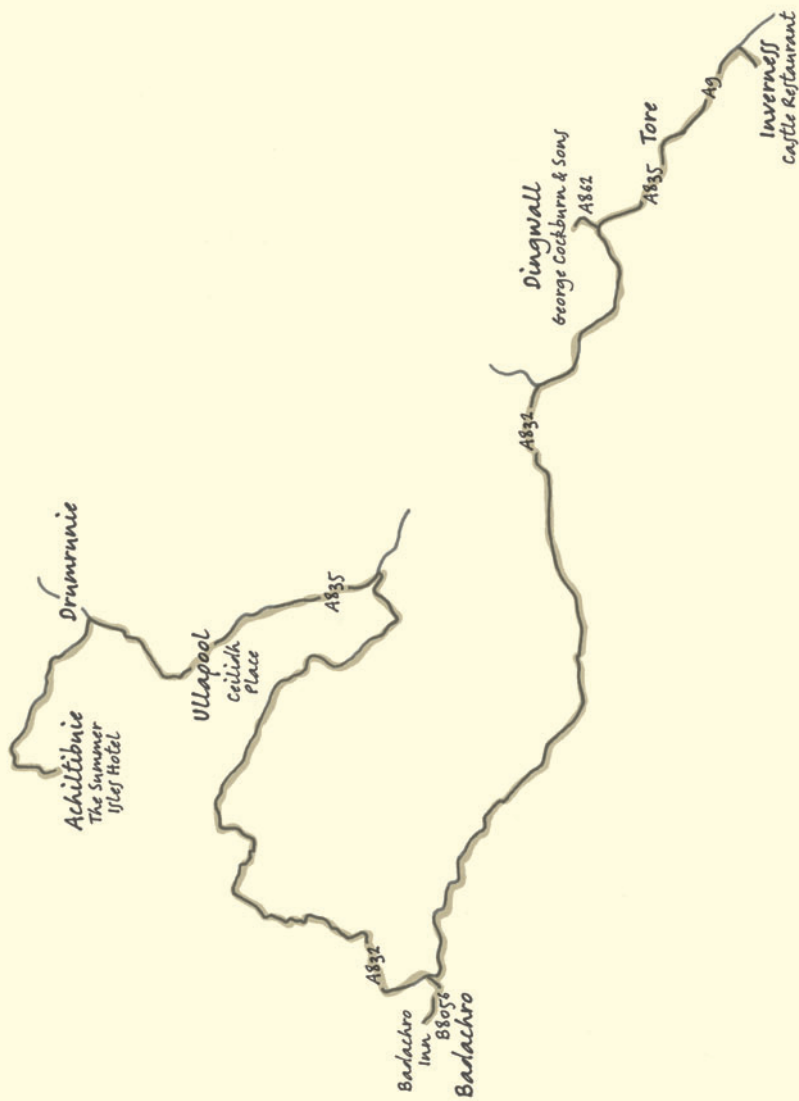
Once back on the A835, continue west in the deepening valley through the village of Contin, driving alongside the railway line around Loch Garve, with dark imposing hills on each side. Take the left turn to Gairloch (the A832), still following the railway line and touching the western edge of Loch Luichart. The road bends and twists through more lochs and through stunning, steep-sided glens, and eventually a left turn onto the B8056 will deliver you to Badachro, and lunch at the warm and welcoming **Badachro Inn**.

Doubling back, turn left onto the A832 winding around the shores of further lochs and through the pretty settlements of Drumchork and Badcaul. The road rises again before joining the A835 once more by the impressive Falls of Measach, where the river plunges 150 feet down the Corrieshalloch Gorge. A suspension bridge above the falls makes for a stunning photo. Pushing on down the valley

alongside Loch Broom, the road eventually drops you off in the fishing port of Ullapool, where you can find fabulous snacks and teas at the unique **Ceilidh Place**, a combined hotel, restaurant, bookshop and live music venue (14 West Argyle Street, Ullapool IV26 2TY; 01854 612103; www.ceilidhplace.com).

Heading out northwest on the A835, take the left turn just before the hamlet of Drumrunie, onto a narrow, winding unclassified road that again follows the lie of the lochs. Turn left again at the next junction, and nestling on the shore of Badentarbat Bay is the village of Achiltibuie on the west coast, where **The Summer Isles Hotel** will provide dinner and, if needed, a room with a romantic vista out across the isles from which it takes its name.

This drive has been created in association with Andrew Cameron, a keen Scottish food champion who works with Scottish Food and Drink.



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 OF 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
ROADSIDE 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