

# FOOD

*and*

# TRAVEL

*Gourmet travels*

**SARDINIA  
CORNWALL**

**Cycling holidays**  
*around the globe*

**Summer fruits**

*Cakes, tarts and aromatic teas*

**Marcus Wareing**  
*goes foraging*

*Flavours of the*  
**Ottoman Empire**

**CITY BREAKS**  
Montreal, Linz and Vigo

*Case the joint with a*  
**Masterclass in meat**

**THE MEDITERRANEAN**

**ISLAND SPECIAL: GOZO SICILY CORSICA CYCLADES AND LOŠINJ**

*Artichokes Marseille Alfresco dining Sailing holidays Deli school*

£3.95

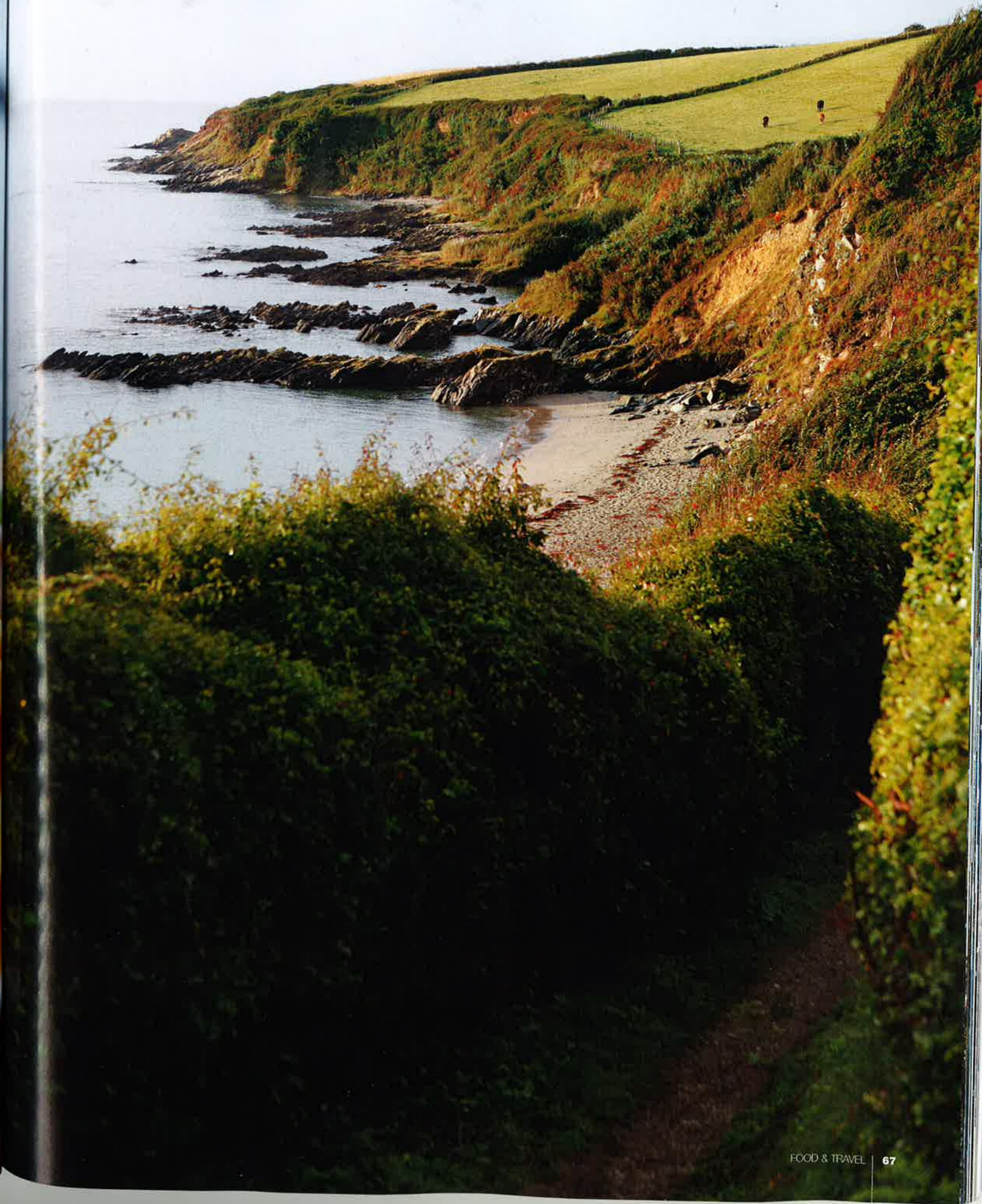
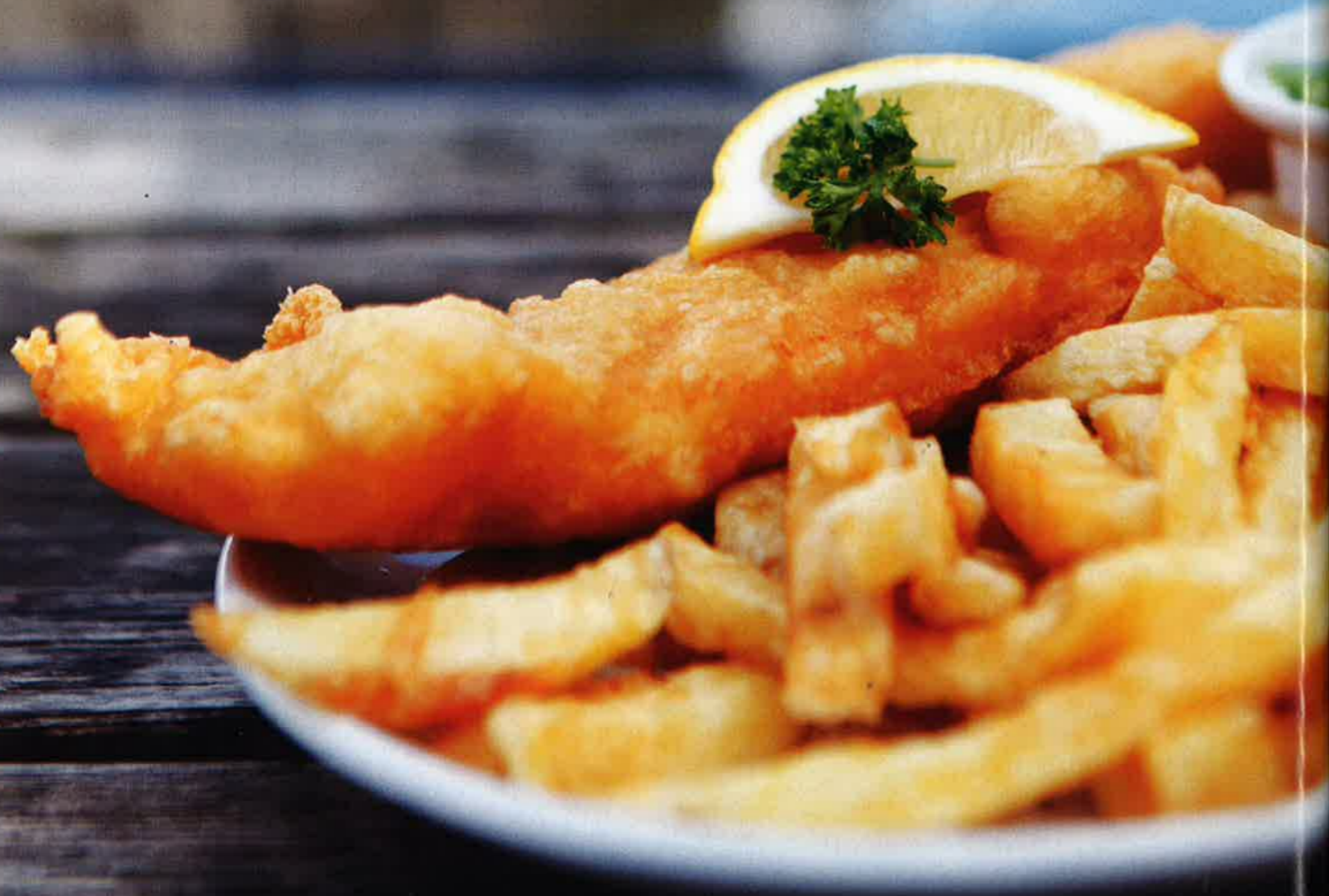


JULY 2014

Cornwall's Roseland peninsula is a land rich with cream teas and fish hauled fresh from the sea, not to mention the local crabs, discovers Marc Millon

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMMA WOOD

# Fal in love





PREVIOUS PAGE, LEFT:  
COD AND CHIPS AT  
HARBOUR LIGHTS;  
PATH LEADING  
TO THE DRIFTWOOD  
HOTEL'S BEACH.  
THIS PAGE:  
PORTLOE HARBOUR

The village's two working boats are winched ashore, metres from The Lugger's kitchen door, landing a catch of Portloe crab. Incredibly fresh and hand-picked, I reckon this is one of the finest foods on earth

Encircled by thick woodland on the steep banks leading down to the River Fal at Tolverne, the Smugglers' Cottage is something of a secret spot. Just north of here is the old-fashioned King Harry chain ferry, which connects Cornwall's Roseland Peninsula with the upper Helford river. The cottage is isolated – at least until you spot the immense, incongruous container ships that moor here, often for months at a time, taking advantage of the sheltered deep-water haven while waiting for global trade to pick up.

We've come to Tolverne to experience Cornish cream tea as it should be eaten – outside in the garden on a balmy summer's day, in the heart of Cornwall. This may sound simple, but the crux of the Cornish cream tea is important. Down here in Britain's southernmost county, the cream always goes on top; up in Devon it goes below the jam, butter-style. Wars have been started over lesser matters and the Cornish are outspokenly stalwart about their cream tea traditions. Ask an elderly Cornishman about a Thunder and Lightning and he'll tell you, with a dreamy smile, that it involves scones topped with clotted cream and golden syrup. But we're sticking to the better-known, arguably less calorific version; freshly baked scones still warm, soft and crumbly from the oven, split and spread with Kea plum jam – it's dark, sweet and tart all at once, made with rare plums grown across the river (more of which later). Next, big dollops of rich Cornish clotted cream that is almost as thick and yellow as the butter produced in the dairies around here. The scones are washed down with a pot of tea, of course. But not any old tea – this is Tregothnan, the only tea actually cultivated and processed in England, grown on the tea gardens of the estate just across the river.

And it's worth a stroll through Tregothnan's beautiful sub-tropical botanic gardens, the only place in the world where those Kea plums grow (they've been cultivated here for 300 years). Garden director

Jonathon Jones enthuses: 'The micro-climate here is amazing. It's actually very similar to a hill station in the Himalayas. We share similar conditions in terms of rainfall, temperature and soil to Darjeeling. That's why we decided to create the first English tea plantation.'

Clearly, we're in a particularly lush corner of Cornwall. Over on the north-west coast, the landscape is defined by its rugged heather-clad cliffs soaring down to wild beaches where the huge surf crashes in, much to the delight of the surfers who flock there. Here however, on the altogether calmer southern peninsula, the luxurious green hills and gardens extend all along the tranquil eastern flank of the Fal Estuary, from Tregony down to St Mawes. It's a land of sailors and rowers who compete in traditional wooden rowing boats – known as gigs – where yachts and pleasure boats cruise the flat blue waters. 'When you cross the bridge at Tregony,' says Niki Law, who with her chef husband Andrew runs the acclaimed Kings Head pub in Ruan Lanihorne, 'you enter another world.'

Indeed, in contrast to the container ships with their skeleton crews, people here aren't waiting for the tide. One senses an industry and prosperity on the Roseland that is self-supporting. This is not seasonal, touristic Cornwall; rather, there's a well-to-do, year-round clientele that lives and eats well. And to satisfy this appetite, there's a growing network of small artisan producers supplying local and Cornish foods of real quality to pubs and restaurants. 'Local, as a rule, costs more,' says Andrew, 'but if the quality's there, we find these days that people will pay for it.'

You can't get much more local than The Lugger Hotel, a boutique establishment located in a restored 17th-century smugglers' inn in the tiny fishing village of Portloe. The village's two working boats are winched ashore



THIS PAGE, FROM TOP LEFT: FAL ESTUARY AT FALMOUTH; WHITE CRAB AT THE LUGGER HOTEL; FALMOUTH BAY SEAFOOD CAFE, TRURO; MACKEREL SALAD AT HARBOUR LIGHTS; URCHIN SHELLS FOR SALE AT PORTLOE HARBOUR; SEAFOOD PLATTER AT THE LUGGER HOTEL





THIS PAGE, FROM TOP: RASTRONGUET CREEK; THE LUGGER HOTEL; PRINCE OF WALES PIER FERRY LANDING IN FALMOUTH, OPPOSITE, FROM LEFT: DEEP FRIED OYSTERS; FRESHLY CAUGHT SPIDER CRAB; PRINCE OF WALES PIER, FALMOUTH; BROWN CRAB; FALMOUTH HARBOUR; THE FERRY BOAT INN'S CHEF, 'BUNNY'; MACKEREL AND TOMATO ON TOAST; FRESH LOBSTER

**Crab is everywhere – served in the shell, on buttered brown bread in pubs, in rich bisques or intensely flavoured soufflés. No visit here is complete without gorging on local crab as often as possible**



on the harbour slipway, just metres from the Luggers kitchen door, landing a catch of local Portloe crab. Incredibly fresh, boiled and hand-picked, I reckon this is one of the finest foods on earth, superior even to the more expensive, infinitely more prized Cornish lobster. That's certainly saying something.

The Luggers serves spectacular fresh crab salads for lunch, or as a starter in the restaurant mixed simply with lemon, crème fraîche and dill. Crab is everywhere on the Roseland – whole, boiled, served in the shell as part of a luxury seafood platter; simple crab sarnies on buttered brown bread in pubs; rich crab bisques or light, intensely flavoured crab soufflés. And no visit to the Fal Estuary is complete without gorging on fresh local crab as often as possible.

The Fal Estuary extends inland as far as Truro, with numerous tributaries, rivers, inlets and creeks branching off on either side. We make our way across the river on the King Harry ferry and continue to Falmouth, an important historic shipping centre, boasting the third deepest natural harbour in the world. Today, with its shipping docks and fishing industry, it remains very much a working town, its port facilities always busy with the to and fro of cargo ships and fishing vessels, pleasure craft and cruise ships.

We arrive early to visit JH & M Choak pasty shop, a third-generation, father-and-daughter business specialising exclusively in the hand production of that most traditional and venerated of all Cornish foods – the pasty. Sarah, who runs the business with her father Charlie, is filling disks of pastry with potatoes, swede, onions, local skirt beef, salt and pepper. Nothing else. She crimps each pasty by hand before baking it for about 45 minutes.

How many pasties does she make a day? 'Sometimes too many, sometimes not enough,' she says, drily. I ask her about the successful campaign to get European protected status (PGI) for the humble Cornish pasty. 'I think it's a good idea,' she nods. 'It's important to look after tradition. You can get pasties anywhere in the country these days, but usually they're nothing like the real thing. A true Cornish pasty is honest working man's food, made simply with good local ingredients.'

It's Tuesday. Outside the shop, the Falmouth farmers' market is in full swing. Farmers' markets have become an important feature of life here in Cornwall and an even bigger gathering happens in Truro on Saturdays, providing an opportunity for small artisan producers to bring their food direct to the public.

There are some notable stalls here. Nigel Ekins's Cornish Smokehouse is probably the smallest —————>>



## Travel information

### GETTING THERE

**First Great Western** ([firstgreatwestern.co.uk](http://firstgreatwestern.co.uk)) operates regular daily services from London Paddington to Truro. Journey time is around five hours.

### RESOURCES

**Visit Cornwall** ([visitcornwall.com](http://visitcornwall.com)) provides extensive information on the region to help you plan your visit.

### FURTHER READING

**Best of Britain Guide to Cornwall** by Lesley Gillian (Crimson Publishing, £12.99) has a section on Truro and the Fal Estuary.





THIS PAGE, FROM LEFT: HELFORD ROCK OYSTERS AT THE FERRY BOAT INN; INTERIOR DETAILS OF THE CABIN AT THE DRIFTWOOD; CHURCH STREET, FALMOUTH, OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CORNISH CREAM TEA; SMUGGLERS' COTTAGE, TOLVERNE; DETAIL OF THE DRIFTWOOD HOTEL; SIGN FOR THE SMUGGLERS' COTTAGE; MONKFISH WITH CRAB CAKES AND PRAWNS AT THE HOTEL TRESANTON; A VIEW FROM ITS TERRACE; THE FERRY BOAT INN; CHEF PAUL WADHAM AT THE HOTEL TRESANTON, ST. MAWES

## Where to eat

Prices quoted are the average cost for two people for three courses with half a bottle of wine

**Budock Vean Hotel** Four-course menu based on local produce, served in a grand formal dining room with live music every night. £90. 01326 252100, [budockvean.co.uk](http://budockvean.co.uk) (see also Where to Stay)

**Driftwood Hotel** Possibly the best restaurant in the area. Head chef Chris Eden makes brilliant use of produce that's literally on his doorstep. £100. 01872 580644, [driftwoodhotel.co.uk](http://driftwoodhotel.co.uk) (see also Where to Stay)

**Falmouth Bay Seafood Café** Stylish little shellfish and oyster bar – come here to spin out a bottle of sparkling wine and a dozen Falmouth oysters. £65. 01872 278884, [falmouthbayseafoodcafe.com](http://falmouthbayseafoodcafe.com)

**Ferryboat Inn** Oysters from the Duchy of Cornwall Oyster Farm are the speciality here, as well as fish, crab and lobsters landed by local boats each day. £55. 01326 250625, [ferryboatinnhelford.com](http://ferryboatinnhelford.com)

**Harbour Lights Fish & Chips** On Custom House Quay, serving fish from sustainable sources approved by the Marine Conservation Society. Good chips from Cornish potatoes. £10. 01326 316934, [harbourlights.co.uk](http://harbourlights.co.uk)

**Kings Head** Outstanding country pub serving simple food. Try the roast Ruan duckling. From £60. 01872 501263, [kings-head-roseland.co.uk](http://kings-head-roseland.co.uk)

**The Lugger Hotel** Overlooks Portloe harbour. Fantastic local seafood. Walk the coastal footpath and come here for a crab salad lunch on the terrace. £75. 01872 501322, [luggerhotel.co.uk](http://luggerhotel.co.uk) (see also Where to Stay)

**The Nare** A quirky, old-school hotel serving a proper Cornish afternoon cream tea, accompanied by views of the Roseland Peninsula. Cream teas from £8.75. 01872 501111, [narehotel.co.uk](http://narehotel.co.uk)

**Smugglers' Cottage and The Tea Bar at Tolverne** Hidden on the banks of the Fal estuary and part of the vast Tregothnan estate. Come here for an afternoon cream tea, light lunches or evening meals in the thatched cottage. £45. 01872 520000, [tregothnanshop.co.uk](http://tregothnanshop.co.uk)

**Hotel Tresanton Restaurant** Modern British meets stylish Mediterranean. Chef Paul Wadham serves deceptively simple cuisine that makes the best use of the bounty of the Fal estuary. Dine outside on the terrace overlooking Falmouth Bay. £100. 01326 270055, [tresanton.com](http://tresanton.com)



## At the award-winning Budock Vean Hotel, situated within its own subtropical gardens, we meet Martin Barlow, whose family has been in the Cornish hotel business for three generations

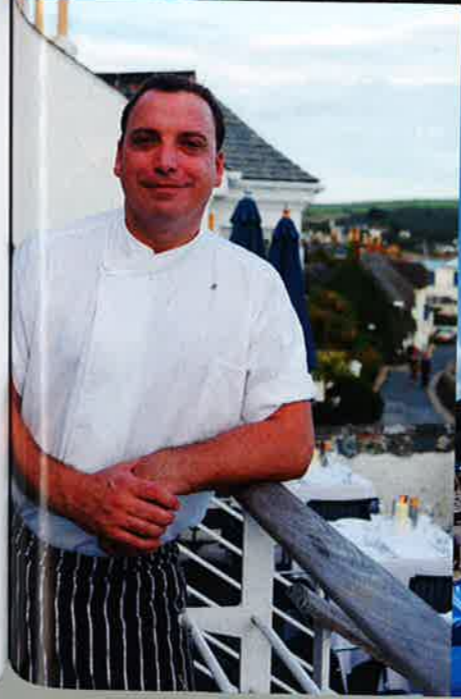
commercial smokehouse in the country. Matsuko Bean of Kernowsashimi brings fresh Cornish fish to the market, caught by her father-in-law. Kim Courtland has a table for organic eggs, and game that he shoots himself. There is all manner of seasonal organic vegetables, breads and baked goods – and local honey from The Lizard.

The market, which is very well attended, is part of the local food movement that has become ever more important all around the country. But, even when the desire is there, the argument for buying local is not always quite so simple. Jude Ekins, Nigel's son, explains to us that in summer he has to use fish from Scotland for his popular hot-smoked mackerel. 'Summer mackerel from our Cornish waters is too lean,' he explains. 'You need a good oil content for smoking. Our salmon also comes from Scotland, offshore raised so that the fish has to swim. It's a beautiful fish, high in oil but not overly fatty.'

Back on Falmouth's waterfront, we meet Peter Frazer, an ex-Royal Navy helicopter pilot who married a Cornish woman and now runs Harbour Lights Fish & Chips. 'When I started the business, I was concerned to ensure that we were environmentally responsible. We therefore work closely with the Marine Conservation Society and use only sustainable fish. We've taken skate and cod roe off the menus, even though they're very popular, because they're not sustainable.'

'We are very up-front about the fact that not all our fish are local. Cod and haddock are still our most popular sellers. At the moment, the Marine Conservation Society deems fish from the Bering Sea and Norway to be the most sustainable and so this is what we use.' For Peter, environmental and sustainability issues are more important than always buying local.

At the award-winning Budock Vean Hotel, situated within its own subtropical gardens, leading down to the Helford river, we meet Martin Barlow, whose family has been in the Cornish hotel business for three generations. Green issues are extremely important to him, too, and the hotel has won numerous awards for sustainable tourism by using green electricity, looking at ways to save water, and tending the gardens and golf course as naturally as possible. 'Looking after this beautiful place is part of our business,' explains Martin enthusiastically, 'it's a responsibility that's important for our long-term success. And our guests expect it, too. We've always bought as locally as possible for the restaurant, but 10 years ago it wasn't necessarily part of our diners' expectations. These days, our guests want to know the provenance of all our ingredients, that our fish is local – even which farm our beef or duck comes from.'



CORNISH  
 TRADITIONAL  
 Cocktail  
 Small  
 Medium  
 Large  
 Extra Large  
 MEDIUM ONLY  
 Vegetarian  
 Cheese & Tomato  
 Chicken



THIS PAGE, FROM TOP LEFT:  
 GARDEN DIRECTOR,  
 JONATHAN JONES PICKS  
 SOME TEA AT THE  
 TREGOTHAN ESTATE;  
 A TEA PLANT; LEMON VERBENA  
 SORBET AT THE DRIFTWOOD  
 HOTEL; VIEW FROM THE KING  
 HARRY FERRY, OPPOSITE,  
 CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
 JH & M CHOAK PASTY SHOP  
 AND ITS PRODUCE; YARG  
 CHEESE AT THE LYNHER  
 DAIRIES; CATTLE GRAZE ON THE  
 HILLS ABOVE THE FAL ESTUARY;  
 DUCKS AT TERRAS FARM;  
 CHURCH STREET, FALMOUTH



**Roger tells us that his family has farmed here for five generations, but it became increasingly difficult with a herd of 70 cattle. A chance encounter with a chef led him to consider farming ducks instead**

Down on the Helford river, we visit The Ferryboat Inn, owned by the Wright brothers and famous for harvesting native oysters from the Duchy of Cornwall Oyster Farm, just upriver. From the brothers we learn of the fragility of this beautiful natural environment. In 2009 an algae bloom wiped out the stocks of native oysters almost completely, a tragedy for this local, protected food. Stocks are only just beginning to recover. I sample some of the Duchy's Pacific oysters instead – they're delicious, with deep mineral flavours, sharp, tingly and persistent, like sucking down the essence of the sea itself.

In addition to oysters, crab and other shellfish, the Ferryboat serves fish landed each day and brought direct to the pub by Phil, the local fisherman. Says chef Robert 'Bunny': 'Cornwall is all about using really fresh produce that arrives on the doorstep. You don't need to mess around with food here. It makes my job easier.'

The Fal Estuary and its hinterland is a rich and fertile larder. In addition to bounty from the sea, lowland farms provide ideal all-year-round grazing for dairy cattle, which supply milk for the production of Cornish clotted cream, ice cream and an emerging range of outstanding farmhouse cheeses. Catherine Mead of Lynher Dairies, source of the acclaimed and distinctive nettle-wrapped Cornish Yarg, explains: 'In the past, small dairy farms always made cheese, all over the country. These cheeses would have been sold locally only. But then we lost the culture of cheesemaking when the former Milk Marketing Board had a policy of purchasing milk to make industrial territorial cheeses. Today we're experiencing a renaissance of small artisan cheesemaking.'

At the Driftwood, a small, stylish boutique hotel on the Roseland just above the South West Coast Path, young Cornish chef Chris Eden explains that when he was learning his profession, he felt he had to leave Cornwall in order to gain experience. So he packed his bags and went to work with some of Britain's most famous chefs in London and elsewhere. By the time he was 26, he felt it was time to return. 'When I was starting off, there were few opportunities here for ambitious chefs. That's all changed and Cornwall is now definitely a food destination. Quality produce goes hand in hand with quality cooking. Here, I can meet and shake the hand of every one of my suppliers. They're the people who help make my restaurant as good as it is. That's what I enjoy. That's why I came home.'

Sure enough, he serves me a brilliant dish of Terras Farm duck breast with a croustillant of confit duck leg wrapped in potato 'spaghetti', with local cherries and two beetroot purées. This is complex, considered, modern and innovative cuisine of the highest order, using the best of Cornish produce.

The next day we visit Terras Farm to meet Roger →



### Where to stay

**Budock Vean Hotel** An award-winning hotel, set in 65 acres of sub-tropical gardens on the banks of the Helford River. There's an indoor pool and a golf course – plus boat trips. From £100 per person dinner, bed and breakfast. 01326 252100, [budockvean.co.uk](http://budockvean.co.uk)

**Driftwood Restaurant** A romantic luxury beach-house hotel overlooking the South West Coast Path, with direct access to the beach. Light, airy maritime décor and simply decorated rooms, with stunning views over the coast. Doubles from £165, including breakfast. 01872 580644, [driftwoodhotel.co.uk](http://driftwoodhotel.co.uk) (see also Where to Eat)

**The Lugger Hotel** Former smugglers' inn on Portloe's tiny harbour. Rooms are in the main inn and annexes, all overlooking the sea. Great base for walks along the South West Coast Path. Doubles from £110, including breakfast. 01872 501322, [luggerhotel.co.uk](http://luggerhotel.co.uk) (see also Where to Eat)

**Hotel Tresanton** Olga Polizzi's designer hotel at St Mawes is a discreet place to stay. All rooms have magnificent sea views, individually furnished with antiques and Cornish art. Doubles from £190, including breakfast. 01326 270055, [tresanton.com](http://tresanton.com)





THIS PAGE, FROM TOP LEFT: CRACKED CRAB; THE CHANNEL FROM THE DRIFTWOOD HOTEL; FRESH SCALLOPS; CHEF CHRIS EDEN; SUCKLING PIG; PLEASANT GRUISE ADVERTISEMENT; THE TREGOTHAN ESTATE; COOKING CHIPS; LOW TIDE IN FALMOUTH; BIRCH HOUSE WEATHER VANE; THE DRIFTWOOD HOTEL

'Cornwall is now definitely a food destination. Quality produce goes hand in hand with quality cooking. Here I can meet and shake the hand of every one of my suppliers. That's what I enjoy and why I came home'



## Where to shop

- Farmers' markets** These take place on Truro's Lemon Quay on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Falmouth's Farmers' Market is on The Moor on Tuesdays. [trurofarmersmarket.co.uk](http://trurofarmersmarket.co.uk)
- Cornish Cuisine** Probably Britain's smallest commercial smokehouse. There's a good deli on site selling all the smoked products as well as a selection of good local foods. 01326 376244, [cornishcuisine.co.uk](http://cornishcuisine.co.uk)
- Curgurrell Farm** Small shop in the farmyard selling garden produce as well as crabs, lobsters and fresh fish direct from boats fishing from Portscatho. 01872 580243, [curgurrellfarm.co.uk](http://curgurrellfarm.co.uk)
- JH & M Choak Pasty Shop** Properly made, hand-crimped Cornish pasties. Killigrew Street, Falmouth, 01326 312426
- Kingsley Village** The food hall of this farm shop sells all the best produce from the Fal Estuary and Roseland. 01726 861111, [kingsleyvillage.com](http://kingsleyvillage.com)
- Tregothnan Botanical Garden Shop** on the estate sells the full range of Tregothnan teas and other products. Guided tours of the botanical gardens and tea plantation by appointment. 01872 520000, [tregothnan.co.uk](http://tregothnan.co.uk)

Olver and Tanya Dalton. Roger tells us that his family has farmed here for five generations, but it became increasingly difficult with a herd of only 70 cattle. A chance encounter with a chef friend led him to consider farming ducks instead.

'Now we work with all the top chefs in Cornwall,' says Roger. 'We have a fantastic relationship with our chefs. For us, it's wonderful to see how the ducks that we hand-raise on a small, free-range scale are transformed so brilliantly in their restaurants.'

From the Hotel Tresanton, overlooking the bay of St Mawes, I gaze out to the lighthouse on St Anthony Head. The landscape beyond is richly textured and complex, both visually and economically. The container ships moored upriver might be waiting for a change in the economic tide, but on both sides of this body of water, people are getting on with their lives, working hard and doing good things. □

*Marc Millon and Emma Wood visited the Fal Estuary courtesy of Visit Cornwall ([visitcornwall.com](http://visitcornwall.com))*

