

# HIGHLAND FOODIE FLING

## A taste of Scotland

By Doug Wallace



LOCH NESS

By going back to the land and sea, these champions of Scottish cuisine win praises from locavores far and wide.

So much more than haggis, tatties and neeps, Scotland’s food scene has come a long, long way.

And nowhere is this more evident than in the Highlands, where the wealth of locally sourced ingredients and a proud heritage come together to produce flavours old and new – artisan bread, the freshest game, seafood caught an hour ago, butter like you’ve never tasted before and the absolute best whisky in the world.

**SKYE’S THE LIMIT**

The Isle of Skye is home to one of the best restaurants in the entire U.K.: The Three Chimneys in Colbost. Run by Chef Scott Davies, this Michelin-star spot is booked for months in advance by foodies who also clamour for a seat in the cozy dining room or at the Chef’s Table. The fabled tasting menu uses ingredients sourced in Skye and Lochalsh, including the freshest oysters and scallops, and succulent smoked fish. There’s also a marmalade soufflé you could practically swim in. Eating in the kitchen gets you in on all the behind-the-scenes activity, including plating your own courses.

**GOING FOR GREEN**

Award-winning Station Road Restaurant is the toast of Fort Augustus, a quaint and beautiful little canal town nestled at the southern tip of Loch Ness. Here you can spend hours just watching the sky change colour or waving at barges and boats being guided through the Caledonian Canal and locks, on their way through the lake system to the sea.

Just far enough away from the tourist throngs of Fort William, this local-produce-driven restaurant is one of the greenest in Scotland, winning accolades for its eco-friendly ways. Comfortable, charming and run like a top by Chef Sean Kelly, the restaurant specializes in inventive five-course dinners headlined by things like succulent duck liver and lamb shepherd’s pie. Station Road is also a supporter of the eco-conscious Trees for Life, a charity that plants trees to help restore wildlife habitats across the Highlands.

**SURE-FIRE SHELLFISH**

With two coastlines to benefit from, not to mention the many inlets, Scotland restaurants feature some of the freshest seafood in the world. At out-of-the-way Loch Leven Seafood Café, a pit stop in the Loch Lomond and the Trossocks National Park region near the fabled village of Glencoe, you’ll find a seafood-lover’s paradise.

The shellfish menu is huge at this little hidden gem, which happily sits beside a worldwide shellfish distribution centre. Seawater tanks keep things as fresh as possible, and the scenery couldn’t be more stunning. Lunch on the patio surrounded by Mamores mountain range is as incredible as it is delicious.

**FAMILY FARM**

Just down the road from Rob Roy’s gravesite near Balquhidder sits Monachyle Mhor Restaurant, a family-run 18th-century farmhouse owned by celebrity chef Tom Lewis. Practically every ingredient on the menu has a pedigree of some sort: Shetland salmon, Angus partridge, Orkney scallops, baked goods from their own nearby bakery, and the list goes on.

Lewis is a bit of a Scottish food legend, a big supporter of home-grown talent and curator of the annual Mhor Festival held on-site each May, along the banks of Loch Voil surrounded by classic Highlands scenery. This annual weekend camp-out features food and fun, music and dance, an artisan market, raft races, a bake-off and more.

**WINNING WHISKY**

In the northeast, the famous grouping of eight distilleries banking the River Spey on the Malt Whisky Trail is a must-visit. Speyside on the whole produces more than half the whisky distilled in the country; reason enough to stock up. The region is also home to the only working cask-making facility in the U.K. This ancient art is alive and well, with the cooperage making or repairing 150,000 oak casks a year.

And if you can still manage a dram or two after all the distillery visits, the Quaich Bar in Craigellachie near Ballindalloch Castle features close to 1,000 different kinds of whisky. The Scots, to their credit, credit the Irish for inventing whisky – they just don’t talk about it much.



LOCHLEVEN SEAFOOD DISH  
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MALT WHISKY FOR TWO  
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