

My kind of day

Fred Sirieix

Where are you happiest?

Definitely when I'm travelling. I love to see new places, meet different people and talk with strangers. But I also like being at home with my family, having that comfort and love around me.

What drew you to move to the UK?

When you're a teenager in your bedroom playing air guitar to English songs and writing poetry in English, all you want to do is go to the UK. So that's what I did. It felt like living the movie of my life.

What's your perfect day out?

I love those walks in the countryside where you stumble across a village, a church and a local pub. You stop, you have a pint, the special of the day. But it's also the people you meet and the random, unexpected conversations that make for a truly memorable day out.

The other day I was out for a walk in Kent and I saw this couple wearing white trainers. I said, "You're courageous, walking like that in the woods." She said, "I thought what the hell, it's the summer." And she was just so English, so nice. I loved this interaction.

What are some favourite spots you love to visit?

I like so many places in the UK. The New Forest

Best known as the star of TV's *First Dates*, the French maître d'hôtel moved to the UK over 30 years ago. Since then, he's developed a deep affection for everything the country has to offer. His new book, *Seriously British*, is his heartfelt tribute to the UK and is out now, published by Bloomsbury.



is fantastic – I love the gastronomy there. Scotland's seafood is just exceptional. Oban – what a place! I love visiting in the summer when the sun barely sets. And how can I not mention Kent? I live there and love the beautiful and unspoilt countryside.

You've got a free weekend at home. How do you spend it?

I'd definitely be gardening. I'd clear up the weeds and mess, then step back and admire my good work!

What's your favourite thing about British culture?

I think more is possible in Britain – it's the fact that people try things. In France, we're much more stuck in our ways – when it comes to things like food and design, you've got to follow the line. In the UK, people are much more free to explore.

What's an experience that's still on your bucket list?

One thing I'd love to do is surf off the coast of Ireland. I think there are some great waves there. I don't know whether I'll be able to handle it, but I like the idea of it!

What are your plans for the next year or so?

What's ahead of me right now is the publication of my book, *Seriously British*. I'm a bit nervous about what people will think, but am super excited to publish it. ■