

THE GOOD GUIDE TO GREAT BRITISH GRUB

As autumn sets in, there's no better time to treat yourself to a hearty meal out. *Angelina Villa-Clarke* finds the best spots in reach of Surrey that champion the best of British cookery.

What does British cuisine mean to you? Maybe you think of a satisfying roast or, perhaps, steaming-hot fish and chips? As our fields yield their bounty for another year, it's the perfect time to celebrate harvest-fresh cuisine – whether that means traditional stews or even a spicy curry. Here's where to find your taste of Britain.



A pub worth travelling to: The Mutton at Hazeley Heath, Hook

It might technically be in Hampshire, but the family-run The Mutton is worth the 50 minute (or so) drive to discover why it was named the country Pub of the Year in the 2024 National Pub Awards. The former 19th century post office-turned public house also holds two AA-Rosettes for its food. Chef Rob Boer celebrates seasonal produce and British classics – try the pub's signature homemade crumpet with beef tartare, slow cooked egg yolk and crispy kale. Other standout dishes include a mean shepherd's pie with slow-braised mutton served with grilled hispi cabbage and a 12-hour cooked beef rump with a side of Guinness and Onion pie.

Found on the edge of a nature reserve, the pub's original features have been elevated by interior designer Jojo Barr, of House Nine Design, with bold colours and velvet dining armchairs. Outside is just as stylish – from the lilac wisteria wrapped pergola to the sage-green timber bar. In fact, the garden has been designed by Hortus Loci, a local plant nursery that supplies the Chelsea Flower Show, with guests able to stroll around the pick-your-own herb garden, enjoy flame-grilled 'Garden Bites' on the patio and book one of the charming Shepherd's Huts (for six or eight people).

themuttonathazeleyheath.co.uk



→ Good for a coastal drive: **The Black Horse, Climping**

If you want to head out to the coast for a weekend spin, then why not plan a pitstop at the Black Horse in Climping? Recently restored by Historic Sussex Hotels, the 17th century pub has long been a popular haunt for locals to gather. The Grade-II listed property was once a smugglers inn and its extensive renovation has seen many original features, such as the parquet wooden floor, restored to their former glory. Now boasting a custom-built pewter bar, you can try a wide selection of craft beers, fine ales and Sussex wines. You can hole up by the double-sided wood burner stove or head into the oak-beamed Ryebank dining room for Brit hits, such as the spicy Guinness and Sussex Charmer cheese soup and Climping beach fish pie. It's the perfect spot for a post-beach ramble.

hshotels.co.uk/theblackhorseclimping



→ Something special in reach of Surrey: **Ockenden Manor, Haywards Heath**

Less than an hour from Surrey, Ockenden Manor has been carved out of a striking Elizabethan manor house. Whether you want to enjoy a classic afternoon tea in the lounge or a celebratory meal in the restaurant, which has bucolic views over Cuckfield Park, chef Stephen Crane's dishes are always on point. Signature dishes include the crispy homemade goats' cheese croquettes and roast fillet of beef served with ox cheek, buttered chard and garlic cream. The coffee and walnut chocolate brownie is another highlight, perfect with a glass of English sparkling wine. The good news is, if you have one too many you can always book one of the hotel's individually-styled rooms for the night.

hshotels.co.uk/ockenden-manor



← British with a twist: **Daastan, Epsom**

For many years, chicken tikka masala has been voted Britain's favourite dish. The award-winning Daastan, on Kingston Road, has been collecting rave reviews since co-owner Anurag Singh opened it in 2016 with chefs Nand Kishore and Sanjay Gour. The restaurant has won a coveted Michelin BIB Gourmand, among other culinary accolades, for its authentic Indian dishes. The simple dining room – with its bougainvillea-pink banquettes and turmeric-yellow walls – belies the subtlety of the dishes. There's just-made pani puri with fresh chutneys, an inspired take on classic lamb chops with mooli mustard, melt-in-the-mouth Malabar prawns and, yes, a sublime tandoori chicken tikka (although the seasonal fish tikka gives it a run for its money). It's British with a spicy kick. daastan.co.uk



← Good for Sunday Roasts: **The Grove, Surbiton**

Found in Surbiton 'Village', The Grove is the perfect hangout after a stroll along the river from Kingston upon Thames. You can't go wrong with the Sunday roast menu, which includes roast porchetta and apple sauce and beef and horseradish, as well as a vegan wellington. The main menu offers British classics, such as fish and chips and a selection of pies, including confit duck pie served with garlic mash, charred cabbage and gravy. For drinks and nibbles (the homemade sausage roll is not to be missed) head to the 'secret' beer garden where you'll find an outside bar and dining terrace with egg-style seating. thegrovet6.co.uk



← A great gastro pub: **The Star, Witley, Godalming**

An original 17th-century inn, The Star, found in the pretty village of Witley, is all about keeping things simple and taking hospitality back to its roots. "No tiny portions, deconstructed dishes, frills or foam – just superb food," is its mantra. As winter sets in, the pub, with a relaxed bar and cosy dining room, offers a welcoming retreat with its inglenook fireplace, original beams and exposed brick walls. In the summer, the courtyard garden becomes a convivial, sun-drenched space for al fresco dining. Harnessing the best of local produce, the menu focuses on modern British seasonal dishes, with a menu that changes every week. Expect: beef shin pasties, chilled pea soup and broad bean hummus, roast Suffolk chicken and slow-roast pork belly. There's Sunday roasts and classic puddings on offer, too (save room for the sticky toffee pudding with butterscotch). thestarwitley.co.uk

