



Gourmet Guernsey

Samantha Mayling gets her teeth into more than just potato peel pie on a trip to the Channel Islands

I'd read the book, seen the film and now it was time to visit the island. Written in 2008, *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* inspired the 2018 movie of the same name.

It gave VisitGuernsey a platform to promote the island around the world, and highlight how it offers foodies far more than just potato peel pie.

The flight from Gatwick took less than an hour to reach Guernsey, the second-largest of the Channel Islands at just 25 square miles.

The island is only 30 miles from France and has a Gallic flavour, thanks to its French place names. As a Crown Dependency, it's not officially part of the UK, but visitors don't have to worry about plugs or currency.

► FINE DINING

Our first evening was full of Gallic flair thanks to David Legoupil, manager of J B Parker's, a restaurant on the cobbled streets of Guernsey's capital, St Peter Port.

Hailing from Normandy, he was our host in the wine cellar, where

we sampled a flight of wines, accompanied by charcuterie, cheese and artisan bread.

He described the systematic approach to tasting wine – the appearance, nose, palate – and a lexicon of terms to describe flavours, from spicy and oaky to floral and fruity. Elements of flavour can vary from yeast and eucalyptus to petrol and wet wool.

With our palates suitably warmed up, we headed upstairs to choose from a mouth-watering menu that included harissa-marinated lamb rump and

pollock and langoustine pie with Guernsey butter mash. Mains cost from £12, with tastings available on an individual basis.

The island is home to just one five-star hotel, the Old Government House – or OGH to locals – where Lily James, star of *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, stayed when she visited for the film's premiere.

We enjoyed an introduction to Guernsey's artisan gins – Blue Bottle, Wheadon's and Unit Six – which tasted as splendid as they looked. I only wished



Old Government House

→ we'd had time to put some stamps in the hotel's Gin Passport, which allows visitors to make their way through 37 locally and internationally made gins.

The hotel has created *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society* menu to tie in with the book and film. It features dishes inspired by the German occupation during the Second World War, when the OGH was used by officers as a military headquarters, becoming a 'soldatenheim' (recreation centre for soldiers) in 1941.

The menu included soldatenheim broth and potato peel pie - but I imagine our pie was tastier than the islanders' wartime version.

The gastronomic delights extend to smaller sister island of Alderney, where St Anne feels more like a seaside town than a capital city.

It may be small, but lunch at the Georgian House was perfectly formed, with delicious seafood options on the menu: Alderney fish soup, pickled mackerel, crab, sea bass, samphire, lobster, pollock and oysters.

Return flights from Guernsey to Alderney start at £96 with Aurigny, while day return trips with The Little Ferry Company cost £50 per person (May to September). Alderney Tours offers two-hour guided sightseeing trips around the island for £15 per adult (April to October).

▶ BACK TO THE LAND


Back on Guernsey, we explored with Andy Taylor of Tour Guernsey in a huge safari truck, which let us spy over hedges into fields and farms.

Our first stop was at Rocquette Cider for an orchard tour with Craig Alexander, who used to run the local airline Aurigny. He showed us how apples from 5,000 trees are collected and processed, and we sampled the cider and apple juice while listening to his plans to start distilling apple brandy.

Next on the tour was Meadow Court Farm to see the 156-strong herd of world-famous Guernsey cows and to coo over the calves. Farmer Ray Watts gave us samples of cheeses produced on the farm.

Lunch was a picnic buffet, spread on the bonnet of the truck, to give us enough energy for a cycling tour of the island with Go Guernsey.

It was a leisurely ride, with a chance to learn more about the German occupation of the island and get off the beaten track among the hedgerows to discover 'hedge veg' - tables of produce left on sale by the locals.

We ended at the Portelet Beach Kiosk for ice cream and fruit loaf Guernsey 'gâche' - pronounced 'gosh', - a fitting end to our foodie adventure. visitguernsey.com 

Sample product

Aurigny offers flights from Gatwick to Guernsey from £90. The airline also flies from Stansted, Bristol, East Midlands, Manchester, Leeds/Bradford and Norwich. aurigny.com

Airways Holidays features four nights' bed and breakfast at the Bella Luce Hotel from £455 per person, departing April 2. The price includes flights from Gatwick, transfers and a 'Gintroduction' experience at Wheadon's Gin distillery. airwaysholidays.com

The Duke of Richmond Hotel in St Peter Port has double rooms from £250 per night, including breakfast. dukeofrichmond.com

A three-hour trip with **Tour Guernsey** costs from £55 per person. Tours operate from May to September. tourguernsey.com

Bike hire with **Go Guernsey** starts from £13 a day. go-guernsey.gg



ASK THE EXPERT



Gill McCarthy, sales director, Airways Holidays Guernsey is a gastronomic delight. Customers are choosing the island for a foodie break as the quality and choice of restaurants is constantly evolving. Airways Holidays' 2019 brochure features a section on Gourmet Guernsey. We have highlighted some of our favourite restaurants, foodie facts and some of the best terraces.

ABOVE: J B Parker's

RIGHT: St Peter Port



PICTURE: JOHN DE GARIS

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