

ESCAPE TRAVEL // CULTURE // ADVENTURE

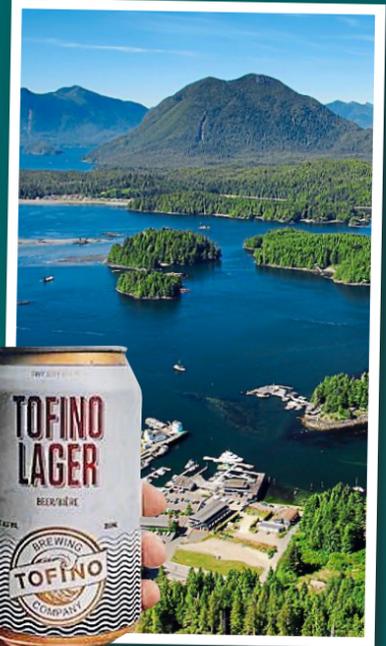


TOFINO, CANADA

It's not all surfing and storm-chasing on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Tofino's buzzy food scene has put the small town (right) on the map and it's starting to attract a new wave of tourists who come for scoff as much as surf.

The laidback vibe means it's a hub for hip eats. There are 'bronuts' at Rhino Coffee House (donuts from £1.70, rhinocoffeehouse.com) or tempura ling cod tacos from the Tacofino van (tacos, left, from £3, tacofino.com) while the kelp stout at nearby Tofino Brewery Company (drinks from £4 a pint, tofinobrewingco.com) is made from sustainably sourced seaweed no less.

And it's not just about dude food, either. New-launch 1909 Kitchen suggests that Tofino is growing up. It's all seafood platters served at a stunning waterfront location (£50, tofinoresortandmarina.com). But the hottest



restaurant in town is still Wolf In The Fog, where the signature dish of oysters wrapped in shoe-string fries (small plates from £3.50, wolfinthefog.com) is a relaxed, surf-town take on fine dining.

Getting off the eaten track

RACHEL WALKER PICKS EMERGING FOODIE DESTINATIONS TO VISIT BEFORE THE CROWDS MOVE IN



PORT LOUIS, MAURITIUS

There's sugar, rum, vanilla, seafood and sweet Victoria pineapple - what's not to love about Mauritian cuisine? Maritime traders from Africa, Asia and Europe dropped anchor in Mauritius, meaning that the small Indian Ocean island has a huge and diverse food culture.

There are Indian-inspired split-pea pancakes (dhol puri), Creole curries and Chinese-style steamed dumplings (boulettes). Explore the street-food scene with a walking tour round Port Louis (above, from £60 per person, mymoris.mu), or go more luxurious with a stay at the newly renovated One & Only Le Saint Géran. Its beachfront barbecue restaurant, La Pointe (mains from the grill start at £30, oneandonlyresorts.com), champions Mauritian cuisine, left, where the daily catch is plucked from the lagoon and cooked over firewood and coconut husk.



MAREMMA, ITALY

Emiko Davies's cookbook, *Acquacotta: Recipes And Stories From Tuscany's Secret Silver Coast*, hit the shelves last year and since then, Maremma has been thrust high up on foodies' travel lists. Think Tuscan wild game and red wine but also deep-fried anchovies, mantis shrimp and richly flavoured fisherman's broths.

The hidden coastal region isn't the kind of place to sniff out new openings; instead, enjoy institutions like I Pescatori, Orbetello, (mains from £8, ipescatoriorbetello.it). The converted horse stable restaurant is attached to the Orbetello Fishermen's Cooperative and serves grilled fish and bottarga on the lagoon.

The nearby towns are dotted with trattorias and gelaterias, with hidden dinner spots like Il Frantoio (mains from £12, frantoiocapalbio.com) serving traditional dishes in a candlelit courtyard setting.

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

This has been the year veganism has gone mainstream and there's no better place to veg-out than in Tel Aviv, where more than 400 restaurants are 'vegan-friendly' (meaning a minimum of 25 per cent of the dishes are vegan).

Inbal Baum hosts guided tours of Carmel and Levinsky Markets, helping tourists navigate heaving bowls of hummus and stacks of baklava (from £65 per person including tastings, deliciousisrael.com).

It's an informal food scene, where some of the most popular joints are fuss-free stalls on street corners. Stop by Hakosem (mains from £4.50, falafelhakosem.com) for slices of deep-fried aubergine or follow the crowds to Miznon (mains from £10, miznon.com) - a recently launched bar where the whole, blackened cauliflower (right) sets Instagram alight and the pitas have a reputation as the fluffiest in town.



PRIORAT, SPAIN

Wine buffs have long headed to the likes of Burgundy and Bordeaux but up-and-coming regions offer better value. It's certainly the case in Priorat, a rural enclave 90 miles south-west of Barcelona.

Wine wasn't bottled here until as recently as the 1980s, when maverick growers first spotted its potential. It continues to attract young growers, and a non-conformist approach is embedded in the Priorat psyche, which champions native grapes (carignan and grenache) and earthenware amphorae for ageing wine traditionally.

Pioneer René Barbier has recently thrown open the doors at his vineyards and winery Clos Mogador (tour and tasting £30, closmogador.com). It's a great introduction to Priorat's wine, which is defined by its minerality from the volcanic black slate and high alcohol content from the scorching summers. Work through a few more samples afterwards at nearby El Celler de l'Aspic (mains from £15, cellerdelaspic.com), which has a joyously low mark-up on bottles and legendary rice dishes featuring pigeon, sea urchin or whatever else is in chef Toni Bru's kitchen.

