



From Apéro to Aperitivo: The EU Food Tourism Trends Set to Shape UK Demand

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As millions of British consumers prepare to travel across Europe this summer, retailers, wholesalers and foodservice operators are being encouraged to look beyond traditional holiday favourites and towards a new generation of regional European products and food cultures that could influence purchasing habits long after travellers return home.

According to advisors from the EU's [More Than Only Food & Drink](#) campaign, food tourism is a significant driver of food and drink discovery, with consumers increasingly seeking out the ingredients, flavours and dining rituals they encounter while travelling.

While products such as Feta PDO, limoncello and spritz-based cocktails have already made the leap from holiday indulgence to UK staple, consumers are becoming more adventurous in the products they discover abroad, creating opportunities for businesses willing to explore lesser-known regional specialities with strong provenance credentials.

Taking inspiration from EU food occasions and rituals

One of the most significant shifts is a growing interest in EU food occasions and rituals. Rather than simply recreating a dish they enjoyed on holiday, consumers are increasingly looking to recreate the entire experience, whether that is a leisurely French apéro, an Italian aperitivo shared with friends before dinner or a Spanish vermouth hour enjoyed alongside small bites and conversation.

These occasions naturally create opportunities across multiple categories, from wine and spirits to bakery, cheese, meat, fresh produce and confectionery.

In France, the tradition of apéro continues to introduce visitors to products that remain relatively underrepresented in the UK market. Alongside regional cheeses and sparkling wines such as **Crémant de Loire PDO**, advisors point to growing opportunities for products including **Lucques du Languedoc PGI** (olives), known for their distinctive crescent shape and delicate flavour, as well as **Miel de**

Provence PGI (honey), which reflects growing consumer interest in premium regional honeys and products with a clear sense of place.

Italy's aperitivo culture is also helping drive awareness of products beyond the country's best-known exports. While consumers remain familiar with staples such as **Parmigiano Reggiano PDO**, holidaymakers are discovering **Mortadella Bologna PGI** (cooked Italian sausage), pistachio pesto from Sicily and speciality citrus products from Calabria, including those made with bergamot. Advisors are also highlighting the potential of Trento sparkling wines (PDO region), which continue to gain recognition among travellers seeking authentic regional alternatives to more familiar sparkling wine categories.

Spain, meanwhile, is introducing consumers to a range of products rooted in regional food traditions. These include **Pimentón de la Vera PDO**, the distinctive smoked paprika produced in Extremadura, **Jijona PGI**, the traditional nougat produced in Jijona, Spain, and Marcona almonds, which are increasingly appearing on premium sharing boards and aperitif menus. The country's long-established vermouth culture is also attracting attention from consumers looking to recreate social drinking occasions experienced while travelling.

Bakery and confectionery are also benefiting from the rise of food tourism. Increasingly, consumers are seeking out local bakeries, cafés and food markets as part of their holiday experience, creating opportunities for retailers to introduce regional specialities with strong heritage credentials. Examples include **Nürnberger Lebkuchen PGI** and **Aachener Printen PGI** from Germany, Portugal's iconic Pastel de Nata, Greece's honey-rich Melomakarona biscuits and Romania's traditional Cozonac sweet bread. As travellers become more adventurous and seek authentic local experiences, demand is growing for bakery and confectionery products that offer provenance, craftsmanship and a genuine connection to place.

Elsewhere, Greece's growing popularity as a culinary destination is helping shine a spotlight on products such as **Kalamata PDO** olive oil, regional honeys and traditional herbal infusions made from mountain botanicals. In Romania, wine tourism is introducing consumers to indigenous grape varieties such as Fetească Regală and Fetească Albă, offering retailers and operators opportunities to introduce shoppers to styles they may not encounter elsewhere.

Neil McAndrew, wine advisor for the "[More Than Only Food & Drink](#)" campaign, comments:

"Travel has become one of the most important routes to food and drink discovery. What is particularly interesting is that consumers are no longer returning from holiday simply looking for a bottle of wine they enjoyed in a restaurant or a cheese they tasted at a market. Increasingly, they are returning with a much broader appreciation of local food culture and the products that help define it.

"Whether it is a French apéro centred around regional specialities, an Italian aperitivo built on local ingredients and sparkling wines, or a Spanish vermouth occasion shared with friends, consumers are becoming increasingly interested in the rituals and traditions that sit behind food and drink. Those experiences create a powerful connection to products and often inspire consumers to seek them out once they return home.

"For retailers and foodservice operators, that presents a significant opportunity. Products carrying PDO and PGI status are particularly well positioned because they offer exactly what many consumers

are looking for after travelling - authenticity, provenance and a genuine connection to place. These products tell a story about a region, a tradition and a way of life. As consumers become more adventurous and food tourism continues to grow, we expect increasing demand for products that allow people to recreate those experiences at home.

"We're also seeing travellers move beyond the most familiar European products and become increasingly interested in regional specialities they may not have encountered before. Whether that's a local sparkling wine from northern Italy, a protected olive variety from southern France, a traditional Spanish confectionery product or an indigenous Romanian grape variety, these discoveries can quickly translate into demand once consumers return to the UK. For businesses willing to embrace these emerging trends, there is a real opportunity to get ahead of the curve."

The trend is being accelerated by social media, which is making it easier than ever for travellers to identify, share and source products they discover abroad. As a result, regional specialities that may once have remained local favourites can now generate interest among UK consumers within weeks of being discovered.

For retailers and operators, the opportunity lies not only in stocking new products but also in merchandising them around occasions and experiences. By tapping into the food cultures consumers encounter while travelling, businesses can create stronger connections between products and the memorable experiences that inspire demand.

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For any further queries, please visit the campaign website

<https://enjoy-its-from-europe.campaign.europa.eu/united-kingdom/en> or contact:
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