



AllWays Traveller

Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, UK

www.allwaystraveller.com

Melton's gourmet trail is a real recipe for success

Melton Mowbray, or just Melton, is a small county town in the north east of the English county of Leicestershire.

It lies close to the picturesque Vale of Belvoir, which translates as 'beautiful view' and is an accurate description of the countryside surrounding Melton.

While it is an attractive town, it is no more so than many others found throughout the country.

But add the range of 'fine fayre' that Melton Mowbray is able to offer to tempt tourists and a visit to the town becomes a really appetising prospect.

To begin with, this is the only place 'in the world' permitted to make either Stilton cheese or the pork pies that bear the Melton Mowbray name.

Then there are fine real ales from an award winning local brewery and the chance to sip Melton Mowbray sloe gin or snack on its hunt cake.

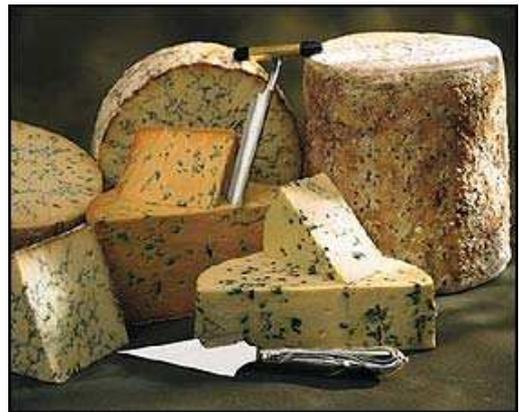
The town also holds one of the UK's oldest and most important weekly cattle markets and has thirty plus cafés and bistros.

To enhance the visitor experience Melton Mowbray also stages food related festivals and events throughout the year and in particular the East Midlands Food Festival every October

Put all this into the mix and Melton Mowbray has created a real recipe for success.

Ashley Gibbins

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www.goleicestershire.com



Staking its claim as the UK's rural capital of food

by Ashley Gibbins

The good folk of Melton Mowbray are four square behind their towns claim to be the UK's *rural food capital* - and with good reason.



Angela and Daryl Woolward, Off the Beaten Track cafe.

During a short break to the town one can :

- savour the wonderful Stilton cheeses, made only here
- chomp into oh so succulent Melton Mowbray pork pies
- enjoy quintessential afternoon tea where the tradition first arose
- dine on local produce in any number of excellent restaurants and country pubs, and
- enjoy fine real ales from a local brewery.

There's also a great choice of wonderful cafes and coffee shops.

To get the best of a short break to Melton Mowbray, my advice would be to travel the town's well planned *gourmet food trail*.

This will see you travelling to and through :

The Melton Cheesboard

Tim and Lyn Brown run *The Melton Cheeseboard* and it would be hard to find a couple more devoted to or knowledgeable about stilton and the 120 other cheeses they sell.



The shop's reputation is such that the couple attract visitors from cheese loving enthusiasts worldwide.



So not even the proverbial eyebrow was raised when a group from Uzbekistan arrived to try and buy some of their 130 cheeses, half of which are locally produced.

www.meltoncheeseboard.co.uk

Catch the cattle market every Tuesday

Melton Mowbray's traditional market was first recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086.

Tuesday is the main market day, with a flourishing street market in the town square and the livestock market a short stroll away.

There's also a fur and feather auction and horse sales and an antique/craft fair.

www.meltonmowbraymarket.co.uk

Say cheese please



Stilton -the 'King of English Cheeses' is officially a *Product of Designated Origin* and so can only be produced in the counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

This creamy blue veined cheese produced today follows the same 18th century recipe.

Try the pies



The *Melton Mowbray Pork Pie* has protected geographical status (PGI) from the European Commission.

The Melton Mowbray port pie is made with uncured pork and has higher meat content than others.

The pies are also 'hand raised', which means the pastry is shaped by hand, and baked without the support of a hoop or tin.

Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe



Next stop has to be *Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe*, which is as old as its name suggests and has been making its pies since 1851.

This is the town's oldest pork pie bakery and the last remaining producer of authentic Melton Mowbray pork pie in the town centre.

Over 4,500 customers a week take away a similar number of pies with double this number during the festive season.

A more select number will get a place on a demonstration of the art of pie making by Stephen Hallam, himself one of Melton's finest ambassadors.

www.porkpie.co.uk

The Belvoir Brewery



The Belvoir Brewery produces a select range of fine real ales, which are sold exclusively at 275 'free houses' within a ten mile radius.

For the visitor to the area a trip to the brewery itself is a treat.

This provides the chance to see how the beers are brewed, have a meal and, of course, to sample Gordon Bennett, Old Dalby or any of the Belvoir's other hand pulled or bottled beers.

One particular favourite is *The blue brew*, an ale flavoured with stilton cheese.

www.belvoirbrewery.com

Where the buffalo roam



Ruth and George Wakeling, run Bouverie Lodge Bison Farm, a working bison and venison farm at Nether Broughton, just outside Melton Mowbray.

The couple welcome visitors and it's a real experience watching the majestic American Buffalo herd of some 150 of these magnificent beasts roaming free – and indeed carefree.

Slaughtering takes place on the farm to make dispatch as quick and stress free as possible with the meat sold in the farm shop.

In addition, Ruth and George farm over 300 deer for venison.

www.bisons.org

A spot of afternoon tea



Melton Mowbray also gave the world the afternoon tea.

In the 1840's, Anna Maria Stanhope would stay at Belvoir Castle as a guest of the Duke and Duchess of Rutland.

Frustrated at the long wait between lunch and dinner she asked for sandwiches, buns and cakes to be served with tea at five o'clock.

Friends were invited to share this treat both here and when Anna moved to London and a tradition was born.

One of the best places to enjoy an afternoon cream tea in the way Anna did is at Stapleford Park (see A place to stay).

It is served in the stately home's elegant drawing room or on the terrace overlooking the landscaped gardens and Leicestershire countryside.

... with a slice or two of Melton Hunt Cake

The Melton Hunt Cake is a fruit cake, originally made in the 1850s for members of the local hunt to eat whilst out fox hunting.

The cake is made from sultanas, currants, muscavado sugar, butter, fresh eggs, cherries and almonds all enhanced with Caribbean Rum.

... and a quick sip of Sloe Gin

Sloe Gin is one of the latest drinks produced locally from the fruit that grows wild on the hedges around the Melton Mowbray area.

A place to stay : Stapleford Park



Stapleford Park is one of the finest country house hotels in England with a history stretching back centuries.



A member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, it sits in 500 acres of Capability Brown landscaped grounds near Melton Mowbray and a short drive from Rutland Water.

While in private hands, Stapleford Park hosted royalty and the country's landed gentry and, as a country house hotel, now offers everyone the same opportunity.



Gourmet food is served in the 2 AA Rosette Grinling Gibbons Restaurant and guests can also take part in a variety of country pursuits and leisure activities including clay pigeon shooting, riding and falconry.

Stapleford Park's 18-hole championship course is home of the PGA's newest tournament The Handa Senior Masters and its Clarins gold spa is housed in the one time stable block.

www.staplefordpark.com

And somewhere to dine

Sysonby Knoll Hotel



The 3-star Sysonby Knoll Hotel is the longest established family run hotel in Melton Mowbray and enjoys a history of service, quality and comfort.

Its restaurant, open for lunch and dinner to non-residents, is ever popular serving fresh seasonal, locally sourced food, cooked simply in a colonial style setting.

www.sysonby.com

A pint at the Anne of Cleves

The *Anne of Cleves* is Melton Mowbray's oldest and most historic pub.

Part of the property dates back to 1327 when it was home to chantry monks.

The pub gets its name because the property was gifted to Anne of Cleves by Henry VIII as part of their divorce settlement.

www.everards.co.uk

The Farm shops



There are farm shops throughout the Melton area giving visitors the chance to take local produce back home.

One of the most popular is Brocklebys Farm Shop.

www.brocklebys.co.uk

Taking a gourmet break in Melton Mowbray



A good way to get a taste of Melton Mowbray is to book a short rural break through Go Leicestershire.

This includes accommodation with breakfast at the 3* Sysonby Knoll Hotel or Scaford Hall in Melton Mowbray or at the 4 Red Star Stapleford Park.

The package comes with a £15 voucher to spend at the Melton Cheese Board, Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe and other participating outlets.

www.goleicestershire.com/short-breaks.

When to go



Being the UK, late spring, summer and early autumn are the best times.

The festive season in Melton Mowbray, with its Christmas market, is also worth checking out or coincide a visit with one of the many festivals and events.

How to get to there

By car

Melton is a two-hour drive from London, via the A1 (M) or M1 with Leicester 14.5 miles away and Nottingham 18 miles.

The M69 and M6 also offer easy access from Birmingham, Wales and the Southwest.

By rail

Direct trains from London to Melton Mowbray take 75 minutes with rail services also linking other major UK cities.

Where to stay



The area of Leicestershire around Melton Mowbray has a selection of accommodation available from country houses and boutique hotels to b&b and converted barns on working farms.

www.goleicestershire.com/where-to-stay

Melton Carnegie Museum



The Melton Carnegie town museum is a wonderful resource run by a passionate professional team and umpteen volunteers.

There are fascinating displays on local history, trades, foxhunting and rural life.

www.leics.gov.uk/meltonmuseum

Did you know



The phrase *Painting the town red*, which conjures up a picture of boisterous revelry, stems from Melton Mowbray.

In 1837, the Marquis of Waterford and his 'gentlemen' friends attended the Croxton Park Races, and afterwards celebrated in the town's local inns.

The much inebriated group then proceeded to purloin a quantity of red paint and painted doors, walls and windows in the Market Place and Burton Street.

The Marquis was then hoisted up on to the Swan Porch to paint the swan.

The local constabulary fared no better when they attempted to put a stop to things.

In the subsequent court case, culprits were found not guilty of causing a riot, but were fined £100 each for common assault.

More information

www.goleicestershire.com

www.eastmidlandsfoodfestival.co.uk
www.meltonbusiness.co.uk

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The International Travel Writers Alliance is the worlds largest association of professional travel writers, editors, broadcasters and photographers.

Ashley Gibbins



Ashley Gibbins, a third generation journalist, is Chief Executive of the International Travel Writers Alliance.