

Leicestershire Foods – did you know?



Melton Mowbray is known as the *Rural Capital of Food*, hosting the East Midlands Food Festival, the British Pie Awards, Pie Fest, Choc Fest, and the Artisan Cheese Fair. There are over 100 establishments in the town involved with food – including leading producers of paneer cheese for the Indian restaurant market and of tofu for the Japanese restaurant market.



The [Artisan Cheese Fair](#) in Melton Mowbray is the UK's largest cheese fair. Around 40 cheesemakers from across the UK offered 200 cheeses to try and buy this year (17/18 July 2021).



[The Good Earth](#) restaurant in Free Lane, Leicester is the second oldest vegetarian restaurant in the country. Founded in 1965 by Sonny and Valerie Monk, the family is now into the 3rd generation running the business.



Melton Mowbray Pork Pies get their design from the need to fit into and stay in the pockets of foxhunters on horseback. Jelly was added to preserve the meat for longer and to ensure the pie didn't crumble when carried by the huntsmen. The pie is also strengthened by using a hot water crust recipe for the pastry. They are not cooked in a case, unlike other pork pies, which gives them their characteristic bowed sides.

They have [Protected Geographical Indication](#) (PGI) status – only pies made from uncured pork (and other specified ingredients), within a designated zone around the town, can be called Melton Mowbray Pork Pies.



Stilton Cheese has *Protected Designation of Origin* (PDO) status – only such cheese produced in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire can use the name, and it must be made from local pasteurised milk. Both [White Stilton](#) and [Blue Stilton](#) have PDO status. It is made in a cylindrical shape and allowed to form its own coat or crust. The distinctive feature of the blue cheese is the magical blue veins radiating from its centre. The cheese takes its name from the village of Stilton, now in Cambridgeshire, where it has long been sold.



Red Leicester Cheese is a traditional hard English cheese made from unpasteurised cow's milk. The history of the cheese dates back to the 17th century when farmers recognized the need to make their cheeses look apart from cheese made in other parts of the country. They decided that the colour of the cheese should denote its richness and creaminess. To set it apart from cheddar and highlight the quality of cheese, Leicester is coloured with a vegetable dye called annatto. It has a slightly nutty taste.

Sparkenhoe Red is made by the [Leicestershire Cheese Company](#) using traditional methods and raw milk.



The [Vegan Society](#) was founded in 1945, thanks largely to Donald Watson, Secretary of the Leicester Vegetarian Society. He also originated the word '**vegan**' - based on the first three and last two letters of 'vegetarian' because it marked, in his words, "the beginning and end of vegetarian" (other terms suggested by readers of *The Vegan News* at the time were allvega, neo-vegetarian, dairyban, vitan, benevore, sanivores, and beaumangeur).



The [Walkers Crisps](#) factory just outside Beaumont Leys, Leicester is the biggest crisp factory in the world, producing over 11 million bags of crisps a day. Walkers get through 350,000 tonnes of potatoes a year. Walkers is the most popular crisp manufacturer in the country - in 2013 it held 56% of the British crisp market.

Production of a bag of Walkers crisps takes 35 minutes from the moment the raw potatoes are delivered to the factory, to the point at which finished product leaves the dispatch bay for delivery to customers.



Some say roll, bap, batch or barm cake, but here in Leicestershire (and most of the East Midlands) a bread roll is definitely a **cob**.