



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Nothing sours a day at a food festival more than watching your produce wilt as you sit in a traffic jam. That's why it pays to plan ahead

Most of us can't wait to boast about our regular jaunts to the farmers' market, but in all honesty are you really making the most of the experience? If you visit the same market every weekend, chances are you've already fallen into the dreaded supermarket trap: the one where you whizz round buying your tried and trusted favourites without experimenting at all.

The farmers' market/food festival circuit is growing rapidly. If you're prepared to travel around, it's easy to vary the venues so you don't get stuck in a food rut. In August alone, you can celebrate all things plum at the Plum Festival in Faversham, Kent (12-20 August), sample and buy fish at the Newlyn Fish Festival, Cornwall (28 August) or indulge your love of Asian food at the Mela, Newcastle upon Tyne (27-28 August). That's before you've visited the many farmers' markets dotted around the country.

The key with a lot of festivals and markets is to get there early, which means not getting lost en route. Before you set off, visit www.transportdirect.info – a new free impartial journey planning website which will help ensure you always arrive before all the best produce is snapped up.

Transport Direct offers door-to-door advice using both public and private transport. All you need to do is enter your starting point and your destination and the site will do the rest for you – calculating possible journeys across various modes of transport and highlighting the quickest, most cost-effective routes.

If you're travelling by car (always wise so you can

stock up), the site will provide you with a simple step-by-step guide to the most direct route. If you'd prefer to plan a journey via certain stop-off points, then you can use the site's 'Day-trip planner' facility, which will create a route to your exact specification.

The site's live travel page saves time by letting you check for accidents or roadworks before you set off. You can also keep up to date with traffic while you're on the move if you have an internet enabled phone. Just log onto www.transportdirect.info/mobile

With Transport Direct, you'll never have to chew your way through another motorway service station sandwich again.

One to watch...

The Great British Beer Festival, (Earl's Court, London, 1-5 August), showcases 700 different real ales, ciders, perries and bottled beers from around the world, including 450 from the UK alone.

Transport Direct tip...

Why not leave the car at home and make a weekend of your trip? Transport Direct will not only help you plan your route by public transport, but it will also help you to find places to stay in the area. By using the 'Find a place' functionality, you can pull up a map of the area with hotels, restaurants and other attractions clearly marked.

www.transportdirect.info

