British food

British food has come under the spotlight recently with the publication of the *Good Food Guide 2009*, a list of the best restaurants in the UK, independently compiled by food critics. Celebrity chef Heston Blumenthal’s The Fat Duck came out on top with Gordon Ramsay’s restaurant on Royal Hospital Road following closely behind, and Oxfordshire restaurant Le Manoir aux Quat’Saisons making the top four.

Many British restaurants have also achieved Michelin star ratings in the latest publication of the list. It is clear that British dining has begun to be increasingly recognised as worthy of recommendation, in representing both British and international cuisine.

The reputation of restaurants producing a specifically British menu has started to grow; as has that of many British chefs, whose *culinary* talents have in many cases earned them celebrity status. Many of these chefs are now famous in the UK and abroad because of television programmes such as *Ramsay’s Kitchen Nightmares*, and *Heston’s Feasts*. These celebrity chefs have been *flying the flag* of home-grown produce, rejuvenating Britain’s iconic restaurant chains, recalling British culinary history and celebrating its classic dishes.

British social attitudes towards food and drink are beginning to change and it could be that fine dining is once again becoming a *cornerstone* of British culture with television trends now *bridging the gap* between *haute cuisine* and people’s everyday experience of food.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Do you have restaurant awards in your country? Which are the most highly regarded? How do the most reputable restaurants in your country compare to those in Britain?

2. Why do you think food has become such a popular part of television culture in Britain in recent years? Is there a similar trend in your own country?

3. Are there any restaurants in your area that serve British food? Do you think you would enjoy eating at one of the restaurants on the *Good Food Guide* list?

**SUGGESTIONS**

Have a look at some of the online menus from top British restaurants and see if you can see any current trends in British dining.

Watch an episode of Channel 4’s *Big Chef Takes on Little Chef* at [http://www.channel4.com/food/on-tv/heston-blumenthal/big-chef-takes-on-little-chef/](http://www.channel4.com/food/on-tv/heston-blumenthal/big-chef-takes-on-little-chef/) to see how top cuisine has been influencing convenience dining in the UK.

**VOCABULARY**

Find definitions of the following words and phrases:

- *culinary*
- *fly the flag*
- *cornerstone*
- *bridge the gap*