**Boiled green peas, fried eggs on bacon, and mint sauce for meat - these are moderately appetizing flavor combinations. Such associations come to mind when thinking about British cuisine. Yet, it hides many surprises, flavors, spices, and dishes brought from various corners of the world. In the new series "James Martin: Great British Adventure," the renowned chef embarks on a journey through his homeland to showcase the diversity of flavors in British cuisine.**

Despite being considered bland and uninspiring, **British cuisine** harbors richness and history. Most notably, the famous tea-drinking ritual - at five o'clock - and the iconic fish and chips with vinegar, which tastes better in any other country than in its homeland.

Recently, British cuisine has been attempting to break away from its unfavorable image. It surprises connoisseurs with certain modernizations, applied with respect for its history and old recipes. The influx of people from Asia and the Far East has had a significant impact on changing culinary traditions. Hence, many Indian, African, and Pakistani restaurants have emerged in Britain. For example, the locally famous industrial town, Birmingham, is renowned for its Balti cuisine. This cuisine developed thanks to the Punjabis - people of Indo-European origin who migrated to Birmingham from northern India and Pakistan. Balti-style food typically consists of one-pot dishes served with Indian and other Asian cuisine additions, such as naan bread or samosas.

British food industry has also improved in recent times, mainly relying on high-quality natural products. Nature has generously endowed these lush green lands with gifts such as fish, seafood, game, as well as wild herbs and fruits. The vegetation covering local fields, meadows, and hills provides excellent fodder for cattle. Britons have begun to promote these treasures both for ecological and culinary reasons.

Traditional British cuisine primarily relied on a large amount of meat, but nowadays it is increasingly enriched with vegetarian dishes. The position of head chef in British restaurants has also gained greater importance. Many culinary programs produced by British television have popularized both the art of cooking and renowned chefs from the Isles. Now, such culinary masters as Jamie Oliver or Gordon Ramsay, as well as the famous British hostess, Delia Smith, are setting the "taste paths" worldwide.

Great Britain is divided into four main regions: Scotland, England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Formerly separate independent states, they are now united under one Crown. Despite a shared political system, they have retained their cultural, linguistic, and culinary distinctiveness.

English Cuisine:

England, especially London, is characterized by a blend of culinary influences from various continents. In London, one can also try quintessential British dishes such as mussels, eels in jelly, and fish fried in deep fat served with vinegar. Additionally, London's juicy steaks, Yorkshire pudding, prawn cocktails, and apple pie for dessert are popular. Besides classics, London is a truly cosmopolitan place where dishes from all over the world converge. In other counties of England, one can discover regional delicacies prepared according to old recipes. For example, in Lancashire County (western England), one can find a full range of traditional English dishes. This region is famous for Lancashire cheese, known worldwide for its high quality. Classified as hard cheeses, due to their melting properties, they are excellent for baked dishes. This region was inhabited by working-class families who worked hard all day, so dishes that could be put into the oven in the morning and were ready when the family returned home after a hard day became popular for economic and practical reasons. One such dish is the famous Lancashire hotpot. It is prepared in one pot with meat, onions, and potatoes. In the past, the most accessible and cheapest meat product was mutton. Nowadays, lamb is used, which is cooked with root vegetables such as turnips or carrots. The famous black pudding is served for breakfast almost all over Great Britain - in Lancashire, it is known as a regional product with its own local recipe. Black pudding is a sausage stuffed with meat, fat, and blood, then cooked and baked. For other nations, it may not be a delicacy, but in England, it is considered a regional delicacy. On the coast, in eastern England, dishes of fish and seafood are popular. This region, like Scotland, is famous for excellent crabs, which are prepared in various ways. Everyone has probably heard of crab salad or crab cakes. Local vegetables are often added to regional dishes. Among the well-known vegetable preserves, piccalilli is worth mentioning - prepared with cauliflower, cucumber, and shallots. Everything is pickled in vinegar with various spices.

Scottish Cuisine:

**Scottish cuisine**, due to its slightly cooler climate, is also much more substantial. Breakfasts do not differ much from the traditional British breakfast, and alongside fried sausages, eggs on bacon, sweet bread is also served. Porridge is also obligatory, and oats are plentiful in Scotland - they are widely grown here and are also used in other Scottish dishes. One of them is skirlie, which is oat flakes with onions, and the dessert cranchan, prepared with fresh raspberries, whisky, and honey, also contains oat flakes in its composition. In Scotland, surrounded by the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, fish and seafood dishes are often eaten, including lobsters. Among fish, Scottish salmon is the most popular, prepared in various ways. Scottish cuisine would not exist without another fish highly popular in this region - namely haddock. It is an ingredient in perhaps the most famous Scottish dish - Cullen skink, to which potatoes and onions are added, as well as milk and butter. French cuisine has become entrenched in Scotland due to the... Auld Alliance - the Scottish-French treaty against England, under which all French citizens also became Scottish citizens and vice versa. Scots adopted many old French dishes and gave them their own names, including Scotch collop transformed from the French escalope. Various types of meat are thinly sliced for this dish: beef, veal, or lamb, seasoned with appropriate spices depending on the type of meat, and then stewed. Scotch collop is usually served with mashed potatoes and toast. Another dish adopted from the French is gigot - a stewed leg of lamb or mutton with carrots and turnips. Scottish cuisine is also famous for game dishes, including wild birds such as pheasants and partridges. Of course, let's not forget about Scottish whisky, produced for centuries. Its original recipe is assigned only to selected Scottish distilleries licensed to produce it.

Welsh Cuisine:

**Welsh cuisine** mainly draws inspiration from the riches of nature. The beautiful, green, Welsh moorlands are ideal pastures for sheep farming. Excellent lamb is often exported to France as well. Many Welsh dishes are based on delicate lamb meat. These include cawl - a stew of lamb, mutton, or pork with leeks, carrots, or other vegetables. Another lamb or mutton stew is scouse. Carrots, onions, and turnips are added to the stewed meat, along with plenty of potatoes, and the finished dish is served with beets and buttered bread. Wales can also boast dishes with mussels or... seaweed. Welsh bake bread with their addition and even add them to cheeses made from sheep's milk.

Northern Irish Cuisine:

In **Northern Ireland**, which may seem like the "unwanted child" on the map of the British Isles, the cuisine is based more on classic ingredients used in the cuisine of the whole kingdom.

However, due to the harsh climate, the food here is quite hearty: meat, seafood, fish, and dairy products are eaten here. Like in Wales, these areas are perfect for sheep farming. The classic breakfast, or Irish lunch called Ulster Fry, is a classic of local cuisine. On the plate, you will find everything that can be fried: sausages, eggs on bacon, bread, potatoes, or potato bread, as well as liver, kidneys, and mushrooms. The old Irish Ulster fry was once fried in lard, but fortunately, lard has now been replaced with healthier fats. In Northern Ireland, like in sister Republic of Ireland, potatoes are king on the table. They have always been the main food product for poor Irish people. Among the potato dishes, we will find colcannon and champ. The former is mashed potatoes with butter and milk with the addition of shallots, while the latter uses cabbage instead of shallots. Ireland is also known for its variety of cheddar cheese produced in Coleraine.