



Mod's at the Thirsty Scholar

Vegan couple Martin 'the mod' Mellors and wife Lynnmarie have been blazing a trail of vegan food across Manchester for over 10 years. Martin, a mod since the 80s, started out 30 years ago as a chef in the NHS, where he studied dietetics and learned to cater for every special diet imaginable. Not happy about having to cook meat at work, he opened a veggie café, then while working as a DJ at city centre pub The Thirsty Scholar, persuaded them to let him move his café into the pub!

Mod's at the Thirsty Scholar has become a local legend, dishing up generous portions of top value pub grub from full English cooked breakfasts and burgers to noodles, crispy tofu, spag bol, Lancashire hotpot, and cupcakes such as sweet pumpkin, mint chocolate, vanilla sponge, salted caramel and Jaffa cakes. Last January the café went completely vegan, influenced by vegan Lynnmarie who does the cooking and shopping at home, and also runs the local vegan social group with over 3,000 members.

Non-veggies with allergies pour into the pub for Martin's expertise, and he pulls in the ravenous rugby and football crowd too, who love the grub and music. They also host five-course work events.

www.facebook.com/modsvegancafe



Travel journal

MANCHESTER

Alex Bourke discovers the best places to find vegan food and festive cheer in this lively city.



Q We're looking for a weekend break with a festive feel. What does Manchester have to offer?

A Manchester has an unbeatable café, pub and music scene all year round. By day there are plenty of exhibitions, galleries and museums, and fabulous shopping at the Arndale Centre. But during the festive season, visitors flock to the huge Christmas Market (10 November to 21 December), which every year gets even bigger, with over 300 stalls and chalets spread across 10 city centre venues selling crafts, jewellery, clothes, toys and gifts from kitchenware to bonsai trees.

While the market's food offerings tend to be quite meaty, reflecting its German origins, there are heaps of veggie options to be found in surrounding cafés and restaurants. Pizzas with vegan cheese have appeared at Zad's in Chorlton and chain restaurants Pizza Express and Zizzi, while Mod's pub café, Ice Shack dessert parlour and Little Aladdin curry house have all recently turned their menus 100 per cent vegan.

www.christmasmarkets.com

Essential eating

Arabian delights

Little Aladdin started out as a regular chicken curry 'rice and three' curry house with vegan options, but now this Manchester institution has gone completely vegan. It's a great stop for a fast meal while out shopping, with favourites such as burger, biryani, falafel or a korma.



Join the revolution

V Rev Diner is the place to be if you like the sound of beefy burger and fries, popcorn chicken, cream egg brownies and peanut butter pretzel. Dominic Moss's original American-style vegan café was so popular that he's now moved into bigger premises and taken it upmarket as a restaurant and bar.



www.vrevmcr.co.uk

N-ice nibbles

Ice Shack desserts parlour in Withington found their non-dairy sales exploding, so in April decided to turn the whole place vegan. Come here for shakes, ice cream, cakes, truffles, pastries and hot drinks.



www.iceshack.co.uk

IN THE KNOW

Plant Powered Sunday, Manchester's new weekly vegan market, has just moved to a new venue at Fairfield Social Club. Every Sunday there are vegan street-food traders, a bar, and gardening and wildlife activities for kids and adults. www.grubmcr.com/plant-powered-sundays

TO WHET YOUR APPETITE...

Manchester Vegan Society welcomes everyone, not just vegans, to weekly Meat Free Monday meals and other events. Their Facebook page is packed with news on where to eat. www.facebook.com/groups/manchestervegansociety