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## DINING GUIDE

**Bayside American Café** (formerly Bintliff's), owned and run by Joe & Diane Catoggio since 2003. The menu includes delicious items like house-made smoked salmon, corned beef hash, crab cakes, sandwiches, salads, Benedicts, and more. Come and discover why customers love Bayside American Café. Breakfast, brunch, and lunch are served daily starting at 7 a.m. 98 Portland St., Portland, 774-0005, [baysideamericancafe.com](http://baysideamericancafe.com).

**Benkay** sushi bar and Japanese restaurant is back! At our new location on 16 Middle Street, chef Ando has designed an authentic Japanese culinary experience close to Portland's waterfront. Full bar and menu including premium sushi, sashimi, and rolls. Monday-Friday: Lunch, 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Dinner: 5 p.m. - close. Saturday - Sunday: 11:30 a.m. - close. 773-5555, [sushiman.com](http://sushiman.com).

**Bistro 233** has something great and affordable for everyone in the family! Come in for our Maine mussels, New York strip steak, baby back ribs, fish tacos, chicken piccata, fish & chips, jambalaya, and our Bistro Burger. No more arguing about food style when you come to Bistro 233—we have it all! Fun, laid-back environment. 233 U.S. 1 Yarmouth. 846-3633, [bistro233.com](http://bistro233.com).

**BlueFin North Atlantic Seafood** in the Old Port harnesses all that Maine is and positions it into a delicious dish. Executive Chef Tim Labonte creates new and unexpected meals using fresh, locally-caught seafood and seasonal ingredients. From breakfast through dinner and anything in-between, your next adventure may just be your next dish. 468 Fore Street. 775-9090, [bluefinportland.com](http://bluefinportland.com).

**Bolster, Snow & Co.** is located in the spectacularly reincarnated brick mansion, The Francis (formerly the Mellen E. Bolster House). With executive Chef Nicolas Verdisco at the helm, Bolster Snow provides guests with warm, genuine hospitality, gracious service, and fiercely seasonal food and drink that are representative of the Northeast Region. 747 Congress St. Portland. 772-7485, [thefrancismaine.com](http://thefrancismaine.com)

**Boone's Fish House & Oyster Room** menu teems with native seafood like fresh Maine lobster steamed over rockweed, a variety of oysters and wood-grilled fish, as well as steaks and chops. Then there's Boone's signature dish: the baked stuffed lobster. Alexander Boone invented the baked stuffed lobster when he opened Boone's right here on the Portland Waterfront in 1898. 774-5725 86 Commercial St., Portland [www.boonesfishhouse.com](http://www.boonesfishhouse.com)

**Bull Feeney's** Authentic Irish pub & restaurant, serving delicious from-scratch sandwiches, steaks, seafood & hearty Irish fare, pouring local craft & premium imported brews, plus Maine's most extensive selection of single malt Scotch & Irish whiskeys. Live music five nights. Open 7 days, 11:30 a.m. - 1 a.m. Kitchen closes at 10 p.m. 375 Fore St. 773-7210, [bullfeeney.com](http://bullfeeney.com).

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# Lucky Shucks

A new restaurant, **The Maine Oyster Company**, sparkles with the gems of Maine's waters.

BY DIANE HUDSON

**O**YSTERS, ESPECIALLY SERVED raw on the half shell, have a concupiscent effect on voracious Mainers. And who can blame us? The preferred aphrodisiac of legendary lover Casanova, oysters are found up and down our coast year-round. (It's a wonder the state population isn't booming.) As our lust for the bivalve continues to rise, the quest for the best is a boon for oyster farmers, particularly in Maine with its favorably cold waters.

These growers are well-served by **The Maine Oyster Company**, a restaurant recently opened in West Bayside. Touting itself as "Farm-to-Slurp Certified," the eatery specializes in serving only Maine-farmed oysters and is "an event space and distributor with the vision of building an oyster community through experience and story."

A blackboard lists libations, from which we order Prosecco (\$9) and East Bayside's Blue Lobster Chardonnay (\$12), both good complements throughout.

Print-outs are provided for us to write in our oyster selections. Tonight, we'll choose from five different mouthwatering mollusks, fished from Scarborough to Casco Bay and Damariscotta. Craving them all, we ask for 10 rather than a dozen (\$29), with plans to follow up on the oyster each of us likes most. Adding those two to another half dozen (\$15)

gives us four more each. We can't decide on "the best," so why not keep indulging?

Styled on a tray of ice, the oysters are easy to identify, served clockwise in the order they appear on the menu. Accompanying mignonettes are subtle enough not to mask the nuances of this delicacy. Reading flavor descriptions of oysters posted at the bar is helpful, especially if you're only looking to try one or two. We can testify that The Wolfe's Neck, for example, is "briny, with a smooth, milky finish," though we didn't notice the "sugar or watermelon" in the Chebeague Island. We did encounter a saltier kiss from the sea than the more subdued Birch Island, however, which boasts a firm texture. If we had to pick a favorite, it might be the toothsome Blackstone Point from Damariscotta or the Nonesuch Pearl from Scarborough, with its superb balance

of brine and sweetness.

The shucker here is top notch. There are no bits of debris, and each shell contains a full portion of the treasured liquor, allowing for a downright satisfying slurp.

Continuing, we savor the acclaimed **Kamasoupra** clam chowder (\$6). Rich and creamy without being cloying, it's generous with clam meat and flavor.

We can't resist the lobster roll (\$17), sourced from a lobsterman who shares Maine Oyster Company owner John Herrigel's dock in Phippsburg. Served with potato chips, the succulent and lightly dressed meat billows out of bread toasted to a gorgeous gold.

If you don't crave a plate loaded with oysters (or even if you do), a good way to experience it all is to order the "Boom Shuck-a-Lucka": six oysters, lobster roll, and soup (\$33). 'Cause you can always add another dozen, right?

On leaving, Herrigel tells us about the photographs gracing the walls.

"These are some of the farmers,"

he says. He names each and tells his or her stories. It's like leaving a friend's home—we've shared in our mutual bounty and will do so again. We're grateful, satiated, and maybe just a little bit giddy! ■



Mexican food from the heart.

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## DINING GUIDE

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**El Corazon**, Mexican food from the heart. Authentic family recipes passed down through generations, plus an "oversized tequila selection." Try Portland's own "Marisco"—a Mexican seafood cocktail of shrimp, bay scallops, clams, octopus, and, naturally, Maine lobster. Open lunch and dinner, Mon.-Thur. 11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.; Fri.-Sat. till 11:00 p.m.; Sun. 9 a.m.-9 p.m. 190 State St. Portland. elcorazonportland.com, 536-1354.

**Fish Bones American Grill** offers creatively prepared American cuisine along the canal in the historic Bates Mill complex in the heart of downtown Lewiston. Open seven days, offering dinner Monday through Sunday, lunch Monday through Friday, and brunch on Sundays. Come get hooked at 70 Lincoln Street, Bates Mill No. 6! fishbonesmaine.com, 333-3663.

**Flatbread Company Portland**, Tucked between two wharves on Portland's waterfront, this family-friendly restaurant features signature pizzas plus weekly carne and veggie specials—all made with local ingredients, baked in a wood-fired, clay oven. Everything is homemade, organic, and nitrate-free. Twenty local drafts and cocktails featuring all-local breweries and distilleries. Flatbread has a perfect waterside, relaxed atmosphere for any occasion. 72 Commercial St., 772-8777, flatbreadcompany.com/portland.

**Homage Restaurant** dazzles with scratch-made, hand-crafted food and cocktails. Tuck into our mushroom tarts, Mom's Fried Chicken, Steak "Wellington," Steak and Scallops, Squash and Beans, Gingersnap Creme Brulee, or Blondie Sundae. 9 Mechanic St. Freeport, ME. 869-5139 homagetherestaurant.com.

**Hurricane Restaurant**, New England cuisine with an international twist. Local produce and seafood, full bar, award-winning wine list, in-house dessert chef, lobster & blueberry pie! Sunday Brunch & Make-Your-Own Bloody Mary Bar. Good restaurants come and go. Great restaurants get better and better. Lunch & dinner seven days a week. Bar menu always available. Reservations suggested. 29 Dock Square, Kennebunkport, Maine. 967-9111, www.hurricanerestaurant.com.

**J's Oyster** is a premier seafood destination and locals' favorite with indoor and outdoor waterfront seating on one of Portland's scenic piers. Established in 1977, J's offers classic favorites and friendly service. *Coastal Living* claimed J's as one of "America's Best Seafood Dives 2016." 722-4828.

**Maria's Ristorante** is Portland's original classic Italian Restaurant. Greg and Tony

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**Pearl Kennebunk & Spat Oyster Cellar** is Chef Rebecca Charles's (of Pearl Oyster Bar, New York) newest restaurant. Enjoy elevated beach food, including Charles's famous reinvention of Maine's lobster roll. Happy Hour on Wed., Thurs., and Sun. from 5 p.m. - 6 p.m. for \$1 oysters, \$5 wines, and well cocktails! 27 Western Ave., Kennebunk. pearl-oysterbar.com/pearl-maine/, 204-0860.

**Pedro's** focuses on simple yet full-flavored Mexican and Latino food. Offering tacos, burritos and an impressive array of margaritas, sangria, beer, and wine. *Especiales de la semana* (specials of the week) keep the menu varied and fresh and showcase different Latino cultures. Seasonal outdoor dining available. Open daily, 12 p.m. - 10 p.m. 181 Port Rd., Kennebunk, pedrosmaine.com. 967-5544.

**Ricetta's Brick Oven Ristorante**, a Maine Italian favorite since 1989. Experience a modern, family-friendly atmosphere with a versatile menu filled with award-winning brick oven pizzas, pasta, grill, and Italian entrees, using as many locally sourced ingredients as possible, plus gluten-free options. Sunday - Thursday 11:30 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Friday & Saturday: 11:30 a.m. - 10 p.m. 240 U.S. Route 1, Falmouth. 781-3100.

**Rivalries Sports Pub & Grill** Now with two fun and comfortable upscale sports bar locations. Known for great casual pub food, Rivalries' menu has something for everyone. And, with 30+ HD TVs and every major pro and college sports package, you won't miss a game! Located at 10 Cotton Street in Portland. (774-6044). And 2 Hat Trick Drive, just off I-295 in Falmouth (747-4020), rivalriesmaine.com.

**Tally's Kitchen at Bayside**, located on 84 Marginal Way in Portland, is a unique breakfast and lunch boutique. Life-long Portlander Julie Taliento Walsh builds on her reputation for quality and affordable classic fare with vegetarian & gluten-free options served in a friendly setting that feels like home. House made baked goods, artisan sandwiches, soups, salads, freshly brewed coffee, and blackboard specials that change daily. Breakfast and lunch: Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. until 3 p.m. 207-400-2533, tallyskitchen.com.

**Twenty Milk Street** welcomes diners with warm, intimate décor and a lovely brick fireplace. Located in the Historic Portland Regency Hotel, we offer Sunday brunch, breakfast, lunch, and dinner, specializing in modern American dishes with a New England flourish. We're proud to serve local produce, seafood and beef, pork, chicken, and turkey from our own farm! 774-4200.

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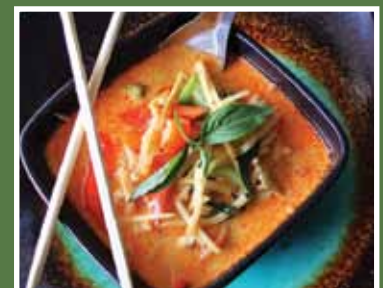
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### Spice Levels

- ★ 1 Star: Coward
- ★★ 2 Stars: Careful
- ★★★ 3 Stars: Adventurous
- ★★★★ 4 Stars: Native
- ★★★★★ 5 Stars: Showoff



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