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A Gastronome’s Guide to Planet Maine

What’s cooking in 2017? We take a glimpse at the events, eateries, and exciting epicurean trends on Maine’s horizon.

For a city where much of the action crystallizes on a peninsula, there’s only so much space available to us. So when a new restaurant surfaces on the radar, it’s often inhabiting the space of an earlier incarnation of the food scene. Rather like a game of musical chairs, Portland’s eateries are shifting: chefs circulate, new owners acquire old favorites (see Caiola’s in Restaurant Review, page 63), and stunning new concepts pop up in old spaces. It may take time before a shiny new spot shakes the ghost of its predecessor. “The Honey Paw—you know, where the Pepperclub was.”

The new year promises many fresh delights. Wunderkind chef Cara Stadler of Bao Bao and Tao Yuan in Brunswick has announced she will open Lio, a restaurant with an accompanying wine shop in 6 City Center (the home of soon-to-depart Styxx nightclub) with sommelier Chris Peterman. The former Borealis Bakery & Bistro on Ocean Avenue was recently transformed into the Neapolitan-themed Tipo, the brainchild of a power pairing between the Goulds of small-plate-mecca Central Provisions and former Scales chef Mike Smith.

Old favorites have returned in the form of Brea Lu Cafe, now sup-

Sneak Peek: Taste Naples, Italy, at Tipo new to Woodford’s Corner (L): beef carpaccio with anguila, smoked garlic aioli, aged balsamic, and parmesan reggiano ($12). (R): Hand-made Garganelli pasta made with oven-braised lamb ragu, apricot, tarragon, and pecorino ($14/$21). Don’t forget the Negroni ($12)!
plying Westbrook with its signature supersized pancakes stacks, while Portlanders were relieved to see the return of El Rayo to Free Street in the former site of Papier Gourmet. Other restaurants transforming retail spaces to food service include Sichuan Kitchen, which will bring Chinese cuisine to the Congress Street site occupied by Anna’s Used Furniture & Collectibles for many years–surely the most dramatic makeover of the year. On Fore Street, the Carla Bella Boutique has become Baristas and Bites, a high-end cafe and patisserie with a to-go lunch service. Lowell Designs on Exchange Street is currently under construction to become a speakeasy-style cocktail joint named Proper Charlie’s. And over on the West End, Vespucci’s variety shop will soon be supplanted by Little Giant, a combination bar and premium corner store from the owners of Hunt + Alpine Club.

ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT
Meanwhile, we wait to discover the fate of David Levi’s Rossobianco, open just four months before an indefinite closure halted our small-plate indulgence. According to the Facebook page, Rossobianco is “restructuring and will reopen in the new year.” Since bidding a sad farewell to Petite Jacqueline’s reign on Longfellow Square (they’re now at 46 Market Street), we’ve been watching in anticipation for the forces behind OTTO to establish their long-awaited flagship burrito joint Ocho at this prize piece of Portland real estate, 190 State Street. Don’t hold your breath—Mike Keon and Anthony Allen confirm they have no plans to pursue the project in 2017. “We’ve decided to stay focused on OTTO. There won’t be any new openings this year.” Ditto for the joint venture with Hero sandwiches, which folded in August after five months of business. “It didn’t work out. We’re walking away from the Hero brand.” This leaves a question mark over the pair’s three empty locations (Monument Square, Longfellow Square, and Congress Street). “We’re paying rent on empty spaces right now. It’s something we’ll have to figure out. It may be that we rent these spaces out to someone else.”

BIG PLANS FOR BIG TREE
It feels like we’ve been waiting for ages to welcome Baharat—the Middle-Eastern-style eatery from the owners of CN Shawarma food truck—to Washington Avenue, but that could just be our hunger for its arrival. On the same street, Pho restaurant Cong Tu Bot promises to be a fixture of our new year. In Westbrook, Big Fin Poké is set to take over the space previously inhabited by the Dancing Elephant Indian Restaurant. The healthy counter service eatery will offer poké bowls—the Hawaiian tuna dish much hyped in California. Think of it as the new sushi.

Talk about on the move. John Myers, beverage director of starry Eventide Oyster Co., recently let slip that “You definitely busted me on my nonchalance regarding the Boston trip…I am so excited for the future of Eventide and the Boston project.” Owners Mike Wiley, Andrew Taylor, and Arlin Smith of Big Tree Hospitality are taking their successful oyster-bar franchise down to Beantown, where they’re opening Eventide Fenway on Boylston Street in 2017. The Press Herald quotes Wiley: “It’s less seasonal down there.” Ouch. Seems like this chic neighborhood can’t resist adopting its own ‘Maine’ flavor. Hope it doesn’t go the same way as the already-closed M.C. Spiedo, another brave attempt by legendary Maine restaurateurs to expand into Boston.
**JANUARY**

**18 PAIRINGS 101: Comfort Food**
Enjoy an evening with **Cellardoor Winery** on Thompson's Point as you dive into the artistry behind food and wine pairings. Escape the cold with a few glasses of wine partnered perfectly with small plates of comfort food prepared by Chef Patrick of Churchill Events and Catering. **Devon Pearse-Theroux**, a pairing expert from Cellardoor, explains that the wine choices are both local and imported, matched with “comfort food chosen to fit the season.” With an emphasis on learning about evoking complementary and contrasting flavors, Pearse-Theroux describes it as a night of “edu-tainment.”

mainewine.com

**28 CHEF SUMMIT**
For an exceptional day of food and skiing, head to **Sunday River’s** gathering of some of the finest chefs and mixologists in New England. The day begins with a blueberry pancake cook-off for breakfast with eight teams of chefs and Sunday River’s own maple syrup. Spend the day out on the slopes before capping it off with a star-studded tasting featuring ten top chefs including teams from Portland’s **Eventide Oyster Co.**, **The Honey Paw**, **Hugo’s**, **EVO**, and **Five Fifty-Five**. sundayriver.com

**28 PORTLAND ON TAP**
The **Cross Insurance Arena** in downtown Portland hosts more than 65 breweries from Maine and beyond. With 130 releases planned for 2017, there’s something to sample for beer snobs across the spectrum.

americaontap.com

**28 FROSTED ICE BAR**
The **Portland Harbor Hotel** may not be hosting its annual ice bar event in 2017, but fear not! **David’s KPT** in Kennebunkport will assuage your desire for icy-drinks luges, s’mores, and hot chocolate.

boathouseme.com
Four’s the Charm

As recognizable on the restaurant scene as his signature dishes, Jason Loring shows no sign of slowing his foodie reign in 2017.

Last year was a big one for you. The Fifth Food Group opened two new spots (Rhum & Grog and Big J’s Chicken), effectively doubling your restaurant real estate.

It was an extremely busy year. I was doing things at a pace I’d never done before. Mike [Frazer of Bramhall Pub] and I had been working on Rhum for about a year, but Big J’s was born out of necessity. Chris [Thompson] and Jeb [Troubh] saw the potential for a small food slot in the space below the Cryptozoology Museum next to Bissell Bros., so we decided to go for it. It could have been as simple as a coffee shop, but that’s not really what I’m into!

What’s on the horizon for 2017?

Thompson and Troubh have big plans for Thompson’s Point. We’re going to be working together to develop the Brick South building into a big events space with a functioning kitchen and bar and even a wholesale bakery. I’m consulting and helping to plan out the food side of things. The Point is even bigger than the Old Port in terms of square footage—and it has parking!

We caught you filming Off the Menu. Are you a TV star now?

A friend from Nosh put me in contact with Off The Menu, whose CEO is friends with [actress] Shay Mitchell (Pretty Little Liars), who was filming [Cadaver] in Boston. They came up to shoot for their YouTube channel, so I took them for back-to-back meals at Slab, Big J’s, and Rhum. She totally stuffed her face. I didn’t even know who Shay was when we met. She’s cool as s**t. People started following us around town as soon as they spotted her. It was surreal.
Star Spud

It’s not just new restaurants to look out for. Maine’s newest tuber, the whimsically named “Caribou Russet” potato (a nod to Senator Collins, a Caribou native who has supported potato breeding programs), will make its debut after many years in development. “Feedback suggests it’s very versatile,” says Don Flannery of the Maine Potato Board. “It works well baked or mashed.” Breakout quality? “A sweet flavor.” Flannery says the Caribou Russet “will be available in most grocers next year.”

says Whitney Pelletier.
thebrunswickhotelandtavern.com

5 ROMANTIC BREAKFAST-MAKING CLASS

Surprise your Valentine with a breakfast to remember. Join the chefs at TiQA restaurant on Commercial Street and learn how to make the perfect Eggs Benedict with a homemade Hollandaise, French toast, hash, and pancake filled with a sweet cheese called Katayef. tiqa.net

11 WINES & VALENTINES

Feel the love with wine tastings & food pairing at the Kennebunk Inn to celebrate the season’s most romantic holiday. Bottoms up! kennebunkportinn.com/

12 HOW TO MAKE PASTA AT HOME

A joint pasta-making class could be the ideal Valentine’s date (or subtle gift for your culinary-challenged partner). Either way, the chefs at TiQA restaurant on Commercial Street will teach the ins and outs of making the perfect pasta dish. After all, who doesn’t love carbs? tiqa.net

17-19 FLAVORS OF FREEPORT

Tour confectioners counters, sample local plates, and enjoy pairings around town at Freeport’s inns and restaurants. The ice bar offers cool libations all weekend long, best enjoyed fireside or while getting down on the dance floor to Motor Booty Affair on Saturday night. freeportusa.com

19 CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL

Head up to Moosehead Lake to satisfy your sweet tooth with samples of fabulous confections at the 13th annual Chocolate Festival. While you glut yourself on plenty of delicious chocolate, make sure to
Hungry Eye

also join in on the family activities, and take part in the Chinese raffle and silent auction to support local businesses. mooseheadlake.org

February Seasonal Update
The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has announced the ban on the Maine shrimp harvest will continue throughout 2017.

20-24 Cooking Camp for Kids
Campers will learn rules for kitchen safety; how to handle a knife properly; how to chop, blanch, and shock vegetables; how to prepare a homemade stock, and much more at TiQA restaurant on Commercial Street. tiqa.net

28 Fat Tuesday Cajun Cooking Challenge
Join WMPG for Mardi Gras madness at the USM Woodbury Campus Center in Portland for the radio station’s 22nd annual celebration of all things Cajun with live music and creative cuisine. Local restaurants compete for bragging rights in a battle of Franco-American food. The reigning champion is Bayside American Café, which promises to up the ante from 2016’s gumbo with chicken and andouille sausage with mini corn cakes. wmpg.org

Notes from the Foodie Front Line

Anestes Fotiades of the Portland Food Map (portlandfoodmap.com) is a kind of cuisine cartographer, charting the geography of Portland’s shifting food scene in its many developments and evolutions. He shares with us his most awaited openings of the new year. “There’s a really good pipeline of interesting spots that will open between now and the start of the summer tourist season.” Here are his most interesting developments:

Baharat
91 Anderson Street
Coming January 2017: “The couple who launched the CN Shawarma food truck is transforming the business into a brick-and-mortar Middle Eastern restaurant in East Bayside.”

Black Cow
Location to be revealed
“Gary Bowcott and chef Nick Nappi’s vision is bring back to life the classic American soda fountain.” TBA.

Cong Tu Bot
59 Washington Avenue
Early 2017: “Chef Vien Dubai and Jessica Sheahan are opening a Pho restaurant on Washington Ave. I’ve been waiting several years since the last Cong Tu Bot pop-up dinner to have another bowl!”

Izakaya Minato
54 Washington Avenue
January 2017: “Newcomers Elaine Alden and chef Thomas Takashi Cooke are set to open a casual Japanese restaurant on Washington Ave. Reviews from their pop-up dinner at Bao Bao were universally positive.”

Lio
3 Spring Street
January 2017: “Chef Cara Stadler and sommelier Chris Peterman are teaming up to open a wine restaurant, where the cuisine will be designed to complement the wine list.”

Tipo
182 Ocean Avenue
Early 2017: “Chris and Paige Gould from Central Provisions are opening a Neapolitan restaurant in the Back Cove neighborhood.”

Gross Confection Bar
Location to be revealed
“Longtime Fore Street pastry chef Brant Dadeleares plans to open a combination dessert and cocktail bar.” TBA

Sticky Sweet
28 Monument Square

The Purple House
378 Walnut Hill Road, North Yarmouth
January 2017: “James Beard-nominated chef Krista Kern Desjarlais is opening a wood-fired bakery and cafe in North Yarmouth. Anyone who had the chance to eat at Bresca is anxiously anticipating opening day.”

Little Giant
211 Danforth Street
January 2017: “Andrew and Briana Volk from the Hunt + Alpine Club have bought a building in the West End where they plan to open a restaurant and neighborhood market.”
Back on the Block

Those familiar with Figa, the Asian fusion attraction of the East End food scene which closed in 2013 after two years, will be stunned at the transformation of 249 Congress Street from cozy neighborhood eatery to a bright, modern bistro with a distinctly European aesthetic. Welcome to LB Kitchen. Vacant for three years, the original red brick walls are now painted a cool white, matching the extensive subway tiling along the counters and quirky accents on the wooden furniture. “The interior came to me in a dream back in 2007. I know, I know—that sounds weird,” says Lee Farrington, looking relaxed as she moves around the open-plan kitchen, its layout unchanged since the days of Figa. The chef isn’t going it alone this time. LB stands for Lee and Bryna, life and business partners. Bryna Gootkind also works for an organic super food brand, Navitas Naturals. “LB Kitchen is our shared vision,” Goodkind says. “It’s something we talked about for over a year,” says Gootkind. “The menu concept is based around functional food—it tastes good and each component does you good. I’m the one who is full of ideas and weird food information. Lee is the magician who pulls it together.” One such example of this dynamic is the bone broth ($7), served to-go in paper cups like coffee. The salty, tasty broth is packed with healthy fats and protein, although “It took Lee a while to get on board with the idea,” admits Bryna.

The star of the menu is surely the LB Bowls (crafted by local ceramicist Amanda Scimino), heaped servings of grains and super foods galore. Figa evangelists will celebrate the reincarnation of Farrington’s wild boar as an LB Bowl, along with coconut and red curry (“I was getting emails about that dish when I closed Figa,” says Farrington. “It had to be included.”). The menu is a mixture of both virtuous and sinful. The healthful bowls, featuring the label “Not Diet Food,” are an enormous portion for $10. Farrington’s fans who know her penchant for cake will not be disappointed. The Practically Famous Cake Slice ($4) is rich, chocolaty…and vegan. “I served it to Norah Jones before her show at State Theater,” says Farrington. “She was like, ‘there’s no way this can be vegan!’”

The bistro will focus on breakfast and lunch servings, closing at 2 p.m. in an attempt to secure that elusive work/life balance for the couple, who have a young child. That being said, their excitement and ambition is palpable. “We’re planning to do ticketed pop-up dinners a couple of times a month,” says Gootkind. “We also see ourselves packaging and selling some of our ingredients, like the ‘Cashew Crack’ nut butter. And I’d love to see a few more locations in the local area in the future.”
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HUNGRY EYE

FEBRUARY

in Portland. Ogunquit, Hallowell, and Camden boast parades, parties, and persillade.

28 INCREDIBLE BREAKFAST COOK-OFF
This annual event, often referred to as “Maine’s best breakfast,” hosted at South Portland Sea Dog, is also for a good cause—100 percent of the proceeds are donated to Preble Street. mainerestaurantweek.com/events

MARCH

1-12 MAINE RESTAURANT WEEK
Okay, so it’s actually a week and five days, but you’ll be glad it went overtime. Throughout Maine, chefs indulge your tastebuds’ wildest fantasies at every meal. Prix-fixe dinners are the main event, but don’t forget to save room for dynamic breakfasts, lunch deals, craft cocktails, and more. mainerestaurantweek.com

3-4 SUNAANA FESTIVAL
Rather than waiting for the summer sun to herald the return of Maine’s festival spirit, Thompson’s Point wants to be your year-round destination for a good time. This March will see the inaugural Sunaana Festival, “a massive party right before winter departs for the season,” according to co-organizer Darren Elder of Halo Studios. Sunaana will bring together all of our favorite things: food, drink, and entertainment. Indulge in some liquid warmth with libations from Bissell Brothers, Cellardoor Winery, or Stroudwater Distillery. Enjoy aerial artists and gymnastic marvels from Circus Maine along with a variety of musical talents hand-picked by The Halo Studios. Elder says the musical acts are a “curation of what is currently percolating.” Whatever that may mean. Sunaana.com

5 PERFECT PAIRING CHALLENGE
Featured bakers and bakeries serving sweet and savory treats are paired with a variety of Coffee By Design styled roasts. New for 2017, coffee beers, stouts, porters, and others will also be poured. mainerestaurantweek.com/events

11 FULL MOON DINNER
Nothing says “Mountain Magic” like a gourmet meal by moonlight. Sunday River invites gastronouts to enjoy dinner and drinks with stunning views at the mid-mountain Peak Lodge. sundayriver.com

12 SPIRIT QUEST
A self-guided cocktail and paired bites walking tour that takes participants to Old Port and Arts District restaurants and bars throughout Portland. A delicious way to spend the afternoon. mainerestaurantweek.com/events
15 PORTLAND SYMPHONY WINE DINNER & AUCTION
Hosted once again at the Harraseeket Inn in Freeport, this annual fundraiser combines glamour with gourmet. Wine is the nucleus of the event, and 2017 means divine vintages from Germany, France, and Austria. Chefs Sam Hayward (Fore Street and Scales), Brian Hill (Francine Bistro), Krista Kern Desjarlais (The Purple House, Bresca & the Honey Bee), and Cara Stadler (Tao Yuan, BaoBao Dumpling House, and Lio) share the kitchen with the Harraseeket’s Troy Mains, creating perfect dishes to complete pairings. 773-6128, portlandsymphony.org

24 FREE ICE CREAM CONE DAY
Spring marks the return of lots of good things in Maine, Gifford’s Ice Cream included. At all five of its family-owned shops in Skowhegan, Farmington, Bangor, Waterville, and Auburn, the shops celebrate the start of the season with free cone day. Snow or no, it’s never too cold for free dessert. giffordsicecream.com

26 BRISKET DERBY
Fuel up to shred the slopes with a day’s worth of barbecue tastings and competitions to benefit the Sunday River Community Fund. The day pairs a brisket cook-off featuring “the best BBQ this side of anywhere” with an exhibition by local fire departments in which firefighters will race a slalom course in full turnout gear. As Sunday River puts it, “a smoke show like no other.” sundayriver.com

26 CHILI CHOWDER CHALLENGE
Chili and chowder cook-offs are never far away in the Pine Tree State, but none can compare to Augusta’s annual Chili Chowder Challenge. Local restaurants battle for the glory at the Augusta Armory while raising funds for the Augusta Children’s Center. chilichowderchallenge.com

26 MAINE MAPLE SUNDAY
Maple farms across Maine offer tastings, syrup-making demonstrations, and sweets to satisfy your sweet tooth. mainemapleproducers.com

Mar. 31 - Apr. 1 SPRING FESTIVAL Sunday River continues a yearly tradition of food, music, and Margarita Mix-Off among local bartenders, plus a key lime pie eating contest. Live music and roving rounds of Sip ‘n Flip keep the fun going all week long. sundayriver.com

APRIL
2 CHOCOLATE LOVERS FLING
The most delicious fundraiser in Maine returns to South Portland’s Marriott at Sable

No Sign of Slowing

JUST IN CASE you were worried the momentum behind the Maine craft brewing movement could not sustain itself any longer, fear not. The coming year looks set to welcome even more openings and expansions by local brewers. In Maine, craft beer remains king.

East Bayside originals Bunker Brewing have made the journey south to a larger space in Libbytown. The 9,000-square-foot brewery and tasting room will be situated just a stone’s throw from Bissell Brothers brewery…and the Cumberland County Jail. In its four years on Anderson Street, owners Chresten Sorenson and Jay Villani (of Salvage BBQ, Local 188, and Sonny’s fame) saw East Bayside transform from industrial wasteland to one of the city’s hottest new spots. Perhaps the move to Libbytown is a signal of things to come?

Joining the ranks of Foundation, Allagash, and Austin Street, Battery Steele will be the new kid on the block at One Industrial Way come February. Owners Shane Noble and Jake Condon cut their teeth working at Gritty McDuff’s brew pubs over the years before deciding to go it alone. “We know we have to hit the pavement running,” says Condon. “There are so many discerning palates around Portland. We grew up on farms in Aroostook County, so our goal is to use as many locally sourced and sustainably grown Maine-based products as possible. In the fall of 2017, our goal is to start using grains from a Maine farmer that were planted especially for us.”

Over in Westbrook, joining the ranks of Mast Landing Brewing will be the affirmatively named Yes Brewing Co. on 609 Main Street, slated to open in April 2017. We quizzed owner John Bigelow on his decision to open outside of Portland. “Portland is absolutely saturated. [Westbrook] is just far enough away from the city that we get that little bit more notoriety…not to mention just that the town itself is phenomenal.”

A casualty of the craft brewing boom, D.L. Geary Brewing Co., a.k.a. the one that started it all in 1983, has reportedly taken a cut in production due to decreased demand following stiff competition from its younger counterparts. According to statistics from the Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages, Geary’s production went down by 34.5 percent between 2011 and 2015. Meanwhile, craft breweries made 113.8% more beer in 2015 than in 2011. As more breweries establish themselves in the state (59 in total, according to figures from Brewers Association in 2015), brewers are having to fight to stake the thirst of an increasingly competitive market. Multiple requests for comment have been rebuffed.

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Thirsty?
Drink events across the year.

Aurora Provisions, Portland.
Two to three free tastings each month on Tuesdays. 871-9060
auroraprovisions.com

Bow Street Market, Freeport.
Up to three events per month in certain months, Saturdays. 865-6631
bowstreetmarket.com

Browne Trading Market, Portland.
Regular tastings March-June in addition to special events. 775-7560, brownetrading.com

Cellardoor Winery, Portland.
Free weekly tastings at The Point, Sundays 1-3 p.m. 763-4778
mainewine.com

The Clown, York. Free tastings on the 2nd Friday of each month, 5-8 p.m. 351-3063
the-clown.com

Craft Beer Cellar, Portland.
Craft beer tastings every Friday. “One of the things we’re looking to do in 2017 is to have tastings from two different breweries at the same time, like a West Coast/East Coast competition,” says Jason Martin, manager. 956-7322 craftbeercellar.com

Cross Insurance Arena, Portland.
Portland on Tap, two sessions of the country’s best craft beers, Jan. 28. 775-3458
crossarena.portland.com

Leroux Kitchen, Portland.
Free tastings on the 2nd Saturday of each month, 1-3 p.m. 553-7665, lerouxkitchen.com

Old Port Wine Merchants, 223 Commercial St., Portland.
Wine tasting every third Wed. 772-9463 oldportwine.com

Otherside Deli, 164 Veranda St., Portland.
Wine tasting every first Tues. 761-9650
othersidedeli.com

Rosemont Markets, Portland and Yarmouth.
Two to three free tastings and events each month on Fridays. 774-8129
rosemontmarket.com

Sweetgrass Winery & Distillery, Portland.
Maine-made wine, bitters, and spirit tastings daily. 761-8446
sweetgrasswinery.com

West End Deli, Portland.
Monthly tastings. 874-6426
thewestenddeli.com

The Wine Seller, Rockland.
Free tastings twice monthly. 594-2621 thewineseller.biz

Or join decorated Sommelier and native Portlander Erica Archer on a Wine (and Food) Walk or Sail in the area. Walks happen at least twice monthly. “These walks attract people who are interested in understanding the burgeoning Portland food and drink scene. This year we’re planning to do more walks specific to neighborhoods,” says Archer. 619-4630
winewiseevents.com

April

Oaks for year 31. The event is a showcase for Maine’s best chocolatiers, competing for the flavor favor of attendees. You’re not “ganache” want to miss this one. All proceeds go to the Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine. chocolate loversfling.org

May

4 TOAST ON THE COAST
This annual wine tasting gala at Ocean Gateway benefits Easter Seals of Maine. Portland chefs face off in friendly competition while patrons judge the contest between sips of more than 100 varieties of wine. Dancing and a silent auction round out the night and one lucky gala-goer will win a seven-day trip for two to California wine country.
toastonthecoast.com

JUNE

6-11 KENNEBUNKPORT FESTIVAL
Downtown Kennebunkport serves up a food, wine, and an art festival with restaurant specials and gallery receptions around town. 772-3373, kennebunkportfestival.com

11 OLD PORT FESTIVAL
Portland’s historic Old Port district warms up at the start of the summer with this annual party. Live music provides a soundtrack for a day filled with local flavor. Food stands, carts, and trucks are at attention, dishing up a variety of fried fare and ethnic foods. portlandmaine.com

24 GREEK FESTIVAL
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church hosts its annual Greek Festival the last weekend in June. Skip breakfast and head to the big tent on Pleasant Street to fill up on pita, moussaka, and pastries that would make Yia-Yia proud. 774-0281, holytrinityportland.com

24 MAINE WHOOPIE PIE FESTIVAL
Contrary to claims in Pennsylvania, whoopie pies are a New England trademark. What better way to celebrate Maine’s rich heritage than to gobble the state’s official state dessert? Dover-Foxcroft’s annual Maine Whoopie Pie Festival is the ultimate homage, offering a slew of unique flavors and whoopie-related activities, including a road race to free up those

JULY

30 FESTIVAL OF THE SEAS
A celebration of the sea and its bounty with food, wine, and music along the beaches of York and Kittery.
yorkmaine.com
**Lobster Brew?**

Maine’s love for lobster and craft beer knows no bounds. Oxbow Brewing will once again release Saison dell’Aragosta, a traditional farmhouse ale brewed over 11 months using Maine lobsters, infusing the beer with a unique, briny quality. While the mash-up sounds a bit quirky, it seems beer aficionados have responded with zest—Oxbow promises an even larger batch this year. Saison dell’Aragosta is expected to be released in early July. oxbowbeer.com

extra calories. 564-8943, mainewhoopiepiefestival.com

**JULY**

7-9 **MOXIE FESTIVAL**
The Moxie Store is closed, but its spirit lives on in Lisbon Falls with the continuation of that infamous Maine soda. The Moxie Festival is a journey beyond the soft drink, with Moxie-infused food, fireworks, live entertainment, a parade, and a 5K race. moxiefestival.com

9-17 **MAINE POTATO BLOSSOM FESTIVAL**
The 70th annual homage to Maine’s famous tuber takes place in Fort Fairfield when the potato blossoms are in bloom. “Our parade is one of the largest in Northern New England,” said Tim Goff, director of the festival. “We have 100 events over nine days. There’s mashed potato wrestling (which is hugely popular), a tater-tot eating competition, and a giant fireworks display.” That’s not to mention the races, farmer competitions, potatoes cooked up many ways, a lobster and clam bake, contests, pageants, and the crowning of a Potato Blossom Queen. fortfairfield.org

11-16 **CENTRAL MAINE EGG FESTIVAL**
Need an egg-scuse to gorge on quiche? Look no further than Pittsfield’s annual Central Maine Egg Festival. This annual tradition is sponsored by the region’s brown egg industry and celebrates the chicken and the ovum. Seek the answer to which one came first while enjoying egg-themed activities, a Maine’s love for lobster and craft beer knows no bounds. Oxbow Brewing will once again release Saison dell’Aragosta, a traditional farmhouse ale brewed over 11 months using Maine lobsters, infusing the beer with a unique, briny quality. While the mash-up sounds a bit quirky, it seems beer aficionados have responded with zest—Oxbow promises an even larger batch this year. Saison dell’Aragosta is expected to be released in early July. oxbowbeer.com

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9-17 **MAINE POTATO BLOSSOM FESTIVAL**
The 70th annual homage to Maine’s famous tuber takes place in Fort Fairfield when the potato blossoms are in bloom. “Our parade is one of the largest in Northern New England,” said Tim Goff, director of the festival. “We have 100 events over nine days. There’s mashed potato wrestling (which is hugely popular), a tater-tot eating competition, and a giant fireworks display.” That’s not to mention the races, farmer competitions, potatoes cooked up many ways, a lobster and clam bake, contests, pageants, and the crowning of a Potato Blossom Queen. fortfairfield.org

11-16 **CENTRAL MAINE EGG FESTIVAL**
Need an egg-scuse to gorge on quiche? Look no further than Pittsfield’s annual Central Maine Egg Festival. This annual tradition is sponsored by the region’s brown egg industry and celebrates the chicken and the ovum. Seek the answer to which one came first while enjoying egg-themed activities, a
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Wich star shares your favorite local haunt? Don’t forget to keep your eyes peeled next time you eat out—you never know who might be at the next table.

Tina Fey is “one of Duckfat’s biggest fans,” according to Zagat. Duckfat’s Nancy Pugh tells us the restaurant’s other stellar visitors include “David Byrne of Talking Heads, Annie Clark of St. Vincent, Michael Pollan, Rachael Ray, Martha Stewart, and David Chang.”

Back when she really was a Scrappy Little Nobody, we spoke to Anna Kendrick, then 22, about her favorite place to eat out in Portland [February/March 2008]. “My dad and I have to get the spicy scallop roll at Yosaku. I also love Foley’s Bakery and Street & Co.”

When he’s not directing blockbusters and mingling with A-listers in LA, director/producer JJ Abrams cools his heels at his mansion in Camden. Here in town, Abrams has been known to frequent Eventide Oyster Co. “It was a total surprise when he arrived!” says chef Mike Wiley. Hmm. Straight to the front of the line?

Portland native Judd Nelson has a penchant for J’s Oyster, according to Rita Yarnold. His favorite Breakfast Club? “For many years now, ever since I was a little boy, my favorite breakfast spot in Portland has been the Miss Portland Diner,” [Portland Magazine, October 2014].

Some really don’t like it haute. Stephen King recently tweeted this confession: “My eating habits are horrible. My favorite restaurant is Waffle House [in Bangor].” Horrors, Stephen.

Who, What, Where

JULY
parade, and eggy foods.
pittsfield.org

14-16 MAINE CELTIC CELEBRATION
A fitting host city for such a celebration, Belfast presents its 11th annual Maine Celtic Celebration. Music, dancing, and feats of strength mark the occasion, but none compare with the remarkable cheese-rolling championship. Show up and cheer on the cheese-chasers...or the wheel of Dubliner. mainecelticcerebration.com

19-22 CULINARY SCHOONER CRUISES
Chef Annie Mahle hosts a unique epicurean experience aboard the sleek J. & E. Riggins windjammer. Immerse yourself in the natural beauty of land and sea with spectacular scenery and savory sustenance gathered from Chef Annie’s own garden, local farms, and farmers markets. Cruises include lodging, meals, and shore excursions. getrealmaine.com

21-23 YARMOUTH CLAM FESTIVAL
Fried, steamed, baked, or chowdered, this beloved annual feast takes over Main Street, Yarmouth with all the mollusks you can eat, as well as a road race, Maine crafts, art, live music and more. Proceeds benefit several nonprofits. 846-3984, clamfestival.com

23 OPEN FARM DAY
Your day to connect to life on a Maine farm. The wonder of growing plants and animals will be on full display at participating farms scattered across the state. Approximately 100 Maine farms open their gates to greet guests and tell the story behind the products they sell. Various locations. getrealmaine.com

29 FESTIVAL OF NATIONS
Now recognized as one of the most outstanding family-oriented cultural events held in the state of Maine, this festival celebrates the smorgasbord of cultures that meet in our state. Expand your mind with music, dance, and local cuisine from Somalia, Mexico, and Thailand while strolling through the bright fluttering flags and colorful traditional dress in Deering Oaks Park.
facebook.com/greaterportlandfestivalofnations

AUGUST

2-6 MAINE LOBSTER FESTIVAL
Boiled lobster, lobster rolls, lobster macaroni and cheese, lobster bisque, lobster pot pie...
What We DON’T Do

Save yourself a headache and avoid these Portland foodie faux pas:

- **Try to get into Fore Street on Saturday night without a reservation.** In spite of their claiming to keep one-third of their seating open for walk-ins, even Johnny Carson was turned away for not having a reservation, according to an urban myth. And look what happened to him!

- **Try to sit a large group at Eventide in summer.** Make this your go-to date spot instead during the off-season and save yourself the agony of waiting two hours watching other people’s brown butter lobster rolls glide past.

- **Take your vegetarian pal to Nosh.** Likewise any friend attempting to diet. The outlandishly indulgent menu is designed to break anyone’s resolve entirely. Either way, you’ll bear the brunt of the regret afterwards.

- **Take your no-frills friends to Novare Res.** The shame you’ll feel when they ask for a Bud Light won’t fade for some time. Try Brian Boru instead. The Irish pub straddles the line between mainstream and local beers.

- **Attempt to impress your international relatives with a trip to Green Elephant at peak time on the weekend.** The increasingly common no-reservation rule can make spontaneity a challenge. Prepare to wait for three hours before hunger drives you to Down Town Lounge next door for Miller High Life and burgers.

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### AUGUST

the visionary chefs, both professional and amateur, give Bubba Blue a run for his money. Rockland’s annual Maine Lobster Festival celebrates Maine’s most famous seafood. Activities abound for all ages, including cooking contests, a road race and a craft show, and more. 834-5354, mainelobsterfestival.com

12-13 **PLOYE FESTIVAL AND MUSKIE DERBY**

Better than Bisquick, ployes are traditional Acadian flapjacks. These buckwheat pancakes have sustained Franco-Americans for centuries. In Fort Kent, fuel up on these filling cakes before setting out on the Saint John River for the annual Muskie Derby. 834-5354, fortkentchamber.com

11-15 **ACADIAN FESTIVAL**

Party in the streets of Madawaska at The County’s annual Acadian Festival. Join your French cousins for one big family reunion with traditional foods, artisan displays and craft sales, music, a parade, and true Acadian culture. acadianfestival.com

18 **HIGHLAND GAMES**

Every summer, the St. Andrews Society of Maine brings together all things Scottish at the Topsham Fairgrounds. Traditional musicians and dancers provide the live entertainment, along with sporting events, sheepdog trials, and the hallmark of any good gathering of Scotsmen: haggis. mainehighlandgames.org

26 **WELLS CHILI FEST**

Whether you are a seasoned pro or an amateur chili maker, the Wells Chili Fest is the ultimate Maine battleground for savory Southwest stew. The event is sanctioned by the International Chili Society, running categorized competitions for serious cooks. “Whoever wins our competition represents Maine in the ICS World Championship. Chili cooks come from all over the Atlantic seaboard,” said Wells Chamber of Commerce president Eleanor Vadenais. There’s also a People’s Choice cookoff for part-time flavor engineers. 646-2451, wellschilifest.com

15 **FARM TO FORK FONDO**

Cycle for your supper at the Maine Farm to Fork Fondo. A non-competitive event across southern Maine, ending with a pint from Maine Beer Co. and a lobster bake by 111 Maine Catering at Wolfe’s Neck Farm. farmforkfondo.com

16 **HARVEST FEST & CHOWDER COOK-OFF**

This fall festival set on Bethel’s village common kicks off the cold weather right. This autumn festival has something for everyone: crafts, vendors, live entertainment. But the two cookoffs-chowder and apple pie-really make the weekend. 824-2282, bethelmaine.com

22-24 **COMMON GROUND COUNTRY FAIR**

This one-of-a-kind agricultural fair celebrates organic farming in Maine. Sponsored by the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, the Common Ground Country Fair is rural homesteader heaven. Programs include demonstrations for growing and preparing food, livestock showings, and organic food chain-related talks, as well as vendors slingering crafts, produce, and organic fair food. 568-4142, mofga.org

### SEPTEMBER

8-10 **MOUNT DESERT ISLAND GARLIC FESTIVAL**

Don’t forget the Altoids when you head to Southwest Harbor for the annual Mount Desert Island Garlic Festival at Smuggler’s Den Campground. What started as a friends-only harvest party has grown into a beloved island tradition. Local chefs serve up garlicky goodies, and farmers present their finest bulbs at a farmer’s market. Craft beer and live music keep the campgrounds rocking all weekend long. nostrano.com

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### OCTOBER

7 **CHOWDAH CHALLENGE**

Freeport’s Fall Festival weekend guarantees a good time. Chefs all over town cook up specials and purvey pairings. But one culinary event stands above the others: the Chowdah Challenge. “Ten area restaurants showcase their best chowder, and those attending decide which is the best,” said Nancy Trotter, events and communications coordinator of Freeport Community Services. “All
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HUNGRY EYE

proceeds from ticket sales go to Freeport Community Services,” she added. Join in the festivities at L.L. Bean’s Discovery Park in Freeport. 865-3985, freeportusa.com

7-9 Damariscotta Pumpkinfest & Regatta
Gourd-ness gracious! Damariscotta turns orange for one weekend in October for the 11th annual Pumpkinfest and Regatta event. “Anything you can think of doing with a pumpkin, we do it!” says volunteer Robin Mayer. “There are a fleet of hollowed out pumpkins designed into boats floating around the bay; Artists sculpt 1,200 lb. pumpkins into works of art; the Pumpkin drop sees 700-800 lb. gourds dropped from 200 feet onto parked cars; there’s even a pumpkin derby! It’s a lot of fun.” 865-3985, freeportusa.com

15 Maine Cheese Festival
The Maine Cheese Guild hosts this dairy-infused celebration at Savage Oaks Vineyard and Winery in Union. What better place for Maine cheesemakers to gather? Guild members offer tastings and sell their wares to chefs and civilian aficionados alike. mainecheeseguild.org

15 Great Maine Apple Day
Compare apples to apples at the Common Ground Educational Center in Unity. Growers and educators present the history and science behind Maine’s apple varieties and their products. “There’s apple tasting all day long. We have hundreds of different apples, and we show you how to use them,” said Anna Mueller, MOFGA events coordinator. “One vendor always sells apple pizza, and there’s an apple pie contest.” On this fruity day, farms around the state invite you to pick your own. 568-4142, mofga.org

19-23 Harvest on the Harbor
Thousands flock to Portland to experience Maine cuisine at this foodie extravaganza. Spectacular celebrity-chef feast events, tastings of Maine-grown and produced food and drink, and a “big eat” opportunity to sample offerings from dozens of local eateries and beverage purveyors in one large venue. Most events are held on the waterfront. Plan ahead because quite a few events sell out. harvestontheharbor.com
The Sweetest Thing

BEEKEEPING OPERATIONS of all sizes are buzzing through Maine. The fall harvest, usually darker and richer than the mild summer harvest, took a severe hit from 2016’s August and September drought. Meghan Gaven, co-owner of The Honey Exchange in Portland, estimates they “only collected about 20 percent of the normal harvest during the fall.” Last year’s limited yield may underscore the larger issues facing honeybees nationally, but local concoctions such as Maine Mead Works’s Honeymaker Dry Mead and Gritty’s Honey Brown Ale show us Maine’s honey is still in high demand.

NOVEMBER
11-12 MAINE HARVEST FESTIVAL
The Maine Potato Board presents this annual event at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor. The event showcases the Maine food chain from farm to fork, including growers, processors, brewers and wineries, food retailers, restaurateurs, and more. Samples are ample. maineharvestfestival.com

DECEMBER
1-3 & 8-10 CHRISTMAS PRELUDE
Kennebunkport’s annual holiday celebration won’t fit in one weekend. Attendees enjoy in-town shopping in the crisp December air, candlelight caroling, restaurant specials, hot cocoa, and more. Sheila Matthews-Bull, who’s been involved with the Prelude from the start, highlighted “the hat parade. This event grew from people wearing Christmas-themed hats to the Prelude. The parade first started eight or nine years ago. Now we have over 500 people marching in it.” And feel free to bring your furry friend for the annual costumed pooch parade. A veritable winter wonderland, the town receives the man in red himself at the dock—Santa arrives on a lobster boat. christmasprelude.com

–Compiled by Jeanne Dudley