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DINING GUIDE

Anthony's Italian Kitchen, offers home-made Italian cooking using the freshest ingredients, featuring favorites such as pizza, pasta, and sandwiches. Voted "Best in Portland" for three years. Dine-in and catering services on offer. Beer and wine available. Open 11-8 Mon. through Sat. 151 Middle St #5, Portland; and new location Cumberland County Courthouse, 205 Newbury St. anthonyssitaliankitchen.com, 774-8668.

Bolster, Snow & Co., is located on the first-floor of 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 and 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

Bruno's Voted Portland's Best Italian Restaurant by Market Surveys of America, Bruno's offers a delicious variety of classic Italian, American, and seafood dishes—and they make all of their pasta in-house. Great sandwiches, pizza, calzones, soups, chowders, and salads. Enjoy lunch or dinner in the dining room or the Tavern. Casual dining at its best. 33 Allen Ave., 878-9511.

Bull Feeney's Authentic Irish pub & restaurant, serving delicious from-scratch sandwiches, steaks, seafood & hearty Irish fare, pouring local craft & premium imported brews, as well as 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., Old Port, 773-7210, bullfeeneys.com.

The Corner Room features bright, wide-open space with towering ceilings complemented by handcrafted woodwork. Patrons can expect a warm, comfortable atmosphere, marked by the rich aromas of house-made pastas, pizzas, antipasti and artisanal breads. Come and enjoy the taste of Venice in the heart of Portland, ME! 879-4747, 110 Exchange Street. Visit thecornerroomkitchenandbar.com for more information.

DiMillo's Now through December, relax and enjoy Head Chef Melissa Bouchard's masterful creations. Every day, she offers something new and delicious. Try our Early Dinner Specials, Monday-Friday or our wonderful Port Side Lounge, Portland's getaway for grown-ups. Happy Hour includes special menu Monday-Friday, 4-7 p.m. Open daily at 11 a.m., Commercial St., Old Port. Always FREE PARKING while aboard. 772-2216.

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 one of "America's Best Seafood Dives 2016." Find us on Facebook. 772-4828

Kon Asian Bistro Steakhouse & Sushi Bar serves Asian cuisine with modern flair. Japanese, Sushi, Thai, Chinese, or hibachi



Catch of the Season

Discover **BlueFin** at the **Portland Harbor Hotel**, an enchanted oasis in the heart of the hectic holiday Old Port.

BY CLAIRE Z. CRAMER

IT'S A WHIRLWIND DAY of holiday shopping on the Portland waterfront. Suddenly our feet hurt and we're starving. We sweep up the plush carpeted staircase in the foyer of the Portland Harbor Hotel, past the crackling fire by the bar, and into **BlueFin**.

In no time, we're settled into cushy wing chairs, glasses of prosecco and Mohua Sauvignon Blanc in hand (each \$10), overlooking what used to be known as Eve's at the Garden, a serene, landscaped space used for outdoor dining in summer. A pretty little stone nymph perches at the edge of the decorative pool outside our window. Things are definitely looking up.

The name has changed to BlueFin, but the executive chef at this restaurant is still the talented Tim Labonte, and his menu still makes seafood the star. We can't resist **Maine Crab Cakes** (\$18) laced with spinach, presented on

a bed of greens with a delicious grilled-corn tartar sauce and a silken slice of cured lemon. Swooshes of smoked paprika oil race around the edge of the plate. Fresh flavors join forces on the platter to complement the fresh crab without stealing the show.

The crab cakes, like many dishes here, appear on both the lunch and dinner menus. Our **Shrimp in the Weeds** is another: a salad of tender sweet beets, dressed ribbons of Atlantic kelp, and baby greens (\$18). Ginger vinaigrette brightens the





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DINING GUIDE

tables. Private party rooms accommodates groups from business meetings to birthday parties. Choose fresh, delicious items prepared before your table. Family friendly; open Mon.-Thurs. 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m., Fri. to 11 p.m., Sat. 1 p.m.-11 p.m., Sun. 11:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m. 874-0000.

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, hurricanerestaurant.com

Maria's Ristorante is Portland's original classic Italian Restaurant. Greg and Tony Napolitano are always in house preparing classics like Zuppa de Pesce, Eggplant Parmigiana, Grilled Veal Sausages, Veal Chop Milanese, homemade cavatelli pastas, Pistachio Gelato, Limoncello Cake, and Maine's Best Meatballs. Prices \$11.95 - \$22.95. Tue.-Sat. starting at 5 p.m. Catering always available. 337 Cumberland Ave. 772-9232, mariasrestaurant.com.

Pearl Kennebunk & Spat Oyster Cellar is Chef Rebecca Charles's (of Pearl Oyster Bar in Greenwich Village New York fame) newest restaurant. Enjoy an elevated beach food menu, including Charles's famous reinvention of Maine's classic lobster roll. Join us for Happy Hour Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday from 5 p.m. - 6 p.m. for \$1 oysters, \$5 wines, and well cocktails! 27 Western Ave. Kennebunk 04043. 204-0860 pearlloysterbar.com/pearl-maine/

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, 967-5544, pedrosmaine.com.



Thaï Garden

Authentic Thai Cooking

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RESTAURANT REVIEW



Restaurante El Corazon Mexican food from the heart. Authentic family recipes passed down through generations. We serve large and small plates and an "oversized tequila selection." Try Portland's own "Marisco" – a Mexican seafood cocktail of shrimp, bay scallops, clams, octopus, and, of course, Maine lobster. Open lunch and dinner, Tues.-Sat. 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m., 190 State St. Portland. elcorazonportland.com, 536-1354

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 11 Cotton Street in Portland's Old Port (774-6044) and 2 Hat Trick Drive, Falmouth (747-4020), rivalriesmaine.com

Sea Salt Lobster Restaurant delivers an authentic Maine dining experience using fresh, locally harvested seafood to create delicious dishes that will leave you wanting more. Visit us on Route 1 in Saco and try our fresh Maine lobster rolls, renowned Angus beefburgers, clams, haddock, or fish tacos. Open from 11 a.m.-10 p.m., 365 days a year. 660 Main St, Saco, seasaltlobsterrestaurant.com, 494-1178.

sliced beets and greens into something special—the seaweed is a tasty surprise, and it's all topped with a tempting row of cold poached shrimp.

This is turning into just the sort of fancy lunch treat we were looking for.

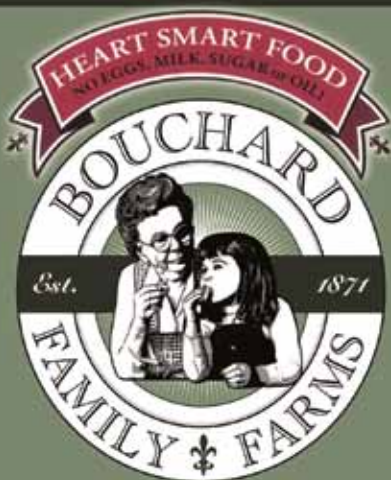
When we return for dinner, we'll try the **Sea Scallop Bucatini** with sherry butter sauce and hazelnuts (\$34) or the **"Clean Shirt Lobster"** with split tail and picked claws (market price), or the **Grilled Pork Loin Chop** with goji barbecue sauce, grilled shishito pepper relish, and farro pilaf (\$29). Bluefin is also a tuna-friendly spot, as you'd imagine, with seared rare tuna creations served lunch and dinner.

For this lunch, we share a **Maple Chicken Reuben** (\$14). It's a highly evolved take

on this sandwich, made with local chicken, Morse's sauerkraut, and a truly delicious Thousand Island dressing. It's all layered between slices of rye bread that's maple-kissed and toasted to buttery perfection on the grill. The sum of the parts is like the love child of a panini and French toast. It's presented on a wooden board with a basket of just-fried Maine potatoes and a Morse's sour pickle.

Settled in this serene hotel spot, we're so happy to be here instead of elsewhere, standing in line with the herd for oysters. We've lucked into the way holiday celebrations should be. ■

Bluefin at the Portland Harbor Hotel, Lunch Mon.-Sat. 11:30-2; Sun. Brunch 11-2; Dinner daily 5:30-9:30 468 Fore St, 775-9090, portlandharborhotel.com



PLOYES

French Acadian pancakes made from unique buckwheat flour have delighted St. John Valley families for generations. Simply add water to the ploye mix, cook on a HOT, preheated griddle and enjoy a taste of the past. Top with butter and maple syrup or wrap around your favorite berries, meat spread or ice cream. Delicious!!

Our Ployes are VEGAN FRIENDLY, FAT FREE, CHOLESTEROL FREE & OIL FREE

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