

## Food and Dining in Maine

Already famous for its lobster, Maine has earned a well-deserved reputation as a destination for fine dining using locally sourced foods in creative settings. In addition to lobster and other fresh seafood, Maine is also a leading producer of blueberries, potatoes, apples, and maple syrup – foods that are featured prominently in many traditional and modern Maine recipes.

There is no shortage of opportunities to sample and enjoy the harvest of land and sea throughout the state. From visits to local farms, lobster boat tours, agricultural fairs and award-winning fine dining, Maine's food industry offers culinary discoveries year-round.

### Food Growers and Producers

- Maine is one of the few states where the number of independent farms is growing rather than shrinking. For those looking for a farm day trip or a farmers' market, the Maine Department of Agriculture's Real Maine site provides a searchable database where visitors can plug in criteria from pick-your-own blueberries to food processing tours.
- Maine is home to several wineries, dozens of microbreweries, a number of craft distilleries and a growing hard cider and mead industry. Visitors to these facilities can often take tours to see how these beverages are made and sample the products throughout the state.
- Agricultural fairs pepper the state from late-June through early-October. These large community-based fairs provide visitors ample opportunity to view prize-winning produce, baked goods and livestock. Appetites for fair food can also be satiated by fried dough, snow-cones and other favorites offered along with lobster rolls and baked potatoes.

### Dining Out

- Maine's fine dining scene has exploded in the past ten years and is being recognized by national and international culinary experts. Portland has racked up a number of food-related accolades during the past few years and award-winning chefs and cuisine can be found in all corners of the state.
- Maine has been featured by such popular food and travel show personalities as Andrew Zimmern, Gordon Ramsay, Bobby Flay and of course, Maine's own, Erin French.
- Based in Portland and also offering tours in Kennebunkport, Biddeford, Brunswick, Boothbay Harbor, Rockland and Bar Harbor, Maine Day Ventures' Food Tours offer a variety of tour options for the culinary tourist.
- The Maine Oyster Trail features 75 one-of-a-kind Maine oyster businesses to experience, from farm tours to restaurant experiences.
- American down-home cooking and Maine comfort food like seafood chowders and blueberry pie are staples at Maine's many roadside diners – several of which have been in operation for decades.
- From cracking open fresh lobster at a shack overlooking the coast, to dining on international specialties or enjoying creative meals with locally sourced products, Maine has a restaurant to accommodate every taste and budget.
- Maine's diverse array of food trucks offer creative additions to the already-buzzing food scene, popping up everywhere from state parks to breweries.

**Food Events & Festivals** *(Please check individual event and festival websites for information on schedules, cancellations and virtual options.)*

- Maine Restaurant Week is held in March. Customers can find exactly what suits their needs and peruse participating restaurants online, sorting by categories including curbside pickup, heated outdoor dining, safely spaced indoor dining and more.
- Maine Maple Sunday takes place on the fourth Sunday in March each year. Sugar shacks throughout the state open their doors to visitors seeking to learn how maple syrup is made. Visitors can often sample the fresh, homemade syrup over vanilla ice cream and maple candies, among other sweet treats. Maine's maple syrup can often be purchased at farm stands, in local grocery stores and at fairs and events throughout the year.
- Maine Potato Blossom Festival is held in July and provides visitors with a week of potato-themed events including mashed-potato wrestling, potato picking contest, multinational parade, plentiful food and other family-oriented events in Fort Fairfield.
- The Machias Blueberry Festival is held in August each year to celebrate the famed antioxidant-rich Maine fruit. The event features a blueberry-themed musical, pie-eating contest, community parade, blueberry farm tours and a craft show, among other activities.
- Rockland hosts the Maine Lobster Festival each year and it is one of the summer's most popular events, with five days dedicated to celebrating the clawed marine crustacean. Amateur and professional cooking competitions, more than 20,000 lbs. of lobster and other foods, a lobster crate race, craft show, historical tours and more bring visitors from to this coastal town in early August.
- Apple picking is a fall tradition in Maine with orchards scattered across the state. After picking a few totes of your favorite varieties, you can enjoy hot apple cider and apple-cinnamon baked goods at most locations. Maine Apple Sunday is held on the second Sunday in September to kick-off the apple picking season.
- Portland hosts a premier fall event with Harvest on the Harbor. The event features a Grand Tasting on the Harbor, celebrity chefs, cooking demonstrations and a marketplace filled with food and wine samples.
- The Pemaquid Oyster Festival, held each September in Damariscotta, features entertainment, educational exhibits, and thousands of oysters fresh from the Damariscotta River, one of more than a dozen locations where fresh Maine oysters are harvested. Maine has 16 oyster companies, and each brand has its own distinctive flavor.

For more food events and festivals, visit the Maine Office of Tourism [website](#).

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