

dock&dine

These next few months are the perfect time to explore the charming byways of the coastal northeast. Here, some of our favorite spots for sophisticated jaunts and casual, kicked-back dining.

by Meeghan Truelove

Maine

Fore Street Portland

James Beard Award-winning chef Sam Hayward has established a culinary pilgrimage site with the restaurant Fore Street. The former warehouse is just a block from the water and still has an industrial vibe, but it's been spruced up with handsome hammered-copper touches, a dramatic open kitchen, and a big brick oven where most of the wood-fired fare is prepared. The menu changes daily because Hayward enthusiastically hews to seasonal cooking, and most of the ingredients come from local farmers, foragers, cheesemakers, and fishermen. The preparations are unadulterated, to let the quality of the foodstuffs shine through—simple, turnspit-roasted lamb; the enormously popular wood oven-roasted mussels. One item that's always available—the decadent chocolate soufflé cake, made with local eggs and cream. Luckily, chocolate never goes out of season.

288 Fore St.
207-775-2717; www.forestreet.biz
Nearest marina: DiMillo's Old Port Marina

Massachusetts

Larsen's Martha's Vineyard

First-time visitors flock to the perpetually packed—and often underwhelming—establishments in Oak Bluffs and Edgartown, but the locals know where to go for the quintessential seaside meal.



TOP: Fore Street, Portland, Maine; BOTTOM LEFT: Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts (Photograph by Robert Schellhammer); BOTTOM RIGHT: 21 Federal, Nantucket, Massachusetts

They escape to Menemsha, a tiny fishing village at the end of a road in the town of Chilmark, where hard-working boats bob in the harbor and the bicycle ferry shuttles passengers across the pond to Aquinnah. Larsen's, an unassuming fish market, offers outstanding, no-fuss take-away fare: boiled lobsters, fantastically meaty crab cakes, little-neck clams on the halfshell, bowl of hot chowder. Bring it all out back to the impromptu picnic area of over-turned lobster pots, and don't forget to pack a bottle of wine to enjoy with the sunset—like many Vineyard hamlets, Menemsha is dry.

Dutcher's Dock, Menemsha
757-787-3103
Nearest marina: Vineyard Haven Marina or Edgartown Town Docks

21 Federal Nantucket

If you're wondering where the ritually vacationing blue-bloods, yachties, and prepsters go to celebrate an occasion or just toast the good life, look no further than 21 Federal. A bi-level eatery in a trim 1847 Greek Revival home right in the middle of cobblestoned downtown, the restaurant launched Bob Kinkead's career in 1985 and is now where chef Russell Jaehnig turns out contemporary, island-fresh food summer after summer. The six rooms are coolly appealing—original wide-plank floors, maritime prints, a restrained, putty-colored palette—but the menu is anything but traditional. Sautéed halibut comes with lobster risotto, foie-gras butter, and



21 Federal, Nantucket, Massachusetts

chanterelles; the pan-seared swordfish is paired with corn pudding and black-bean puree. The intriguing wine list includes New World favorites—Williams Selyem, Cloudy Bay—and Old World must-haves such as Chambolle Musigny and Puligny-Montrachet. Finished your meal but not quite ready to leave the clubby, chummy warmth? Go ahead, splurge for that bottle of Chateau d'Yquem.

21 Federal St.
212-352-1900; www.21federal.com
Nearest marina: Nantucket Boat Basin

New York

Perry Street New York City

After several years opening high-profile, raucously bustling ventures, Michelin-starred chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten opted for a return to serious, grown-up food—enter Perry Street. Since the fall of 2005 the restaurant—an exquisite, subdued, and uber-chic room on the ground floor of a glass Richard Meier West Village tower—has been studiously keeping its focus away from hype and on the plate. Bluefin tuna in rice-cracker crust with chile-spiked mayonnaise and crab dumplings with snow peas in a black-pepper broth demonstrate the masterful chef's love of Asian influences, and his continual ability to match unexpected flavors and textures. James Beard Award-winning pastry chef Johnny Iuzzini creates rigorously crafted desserts with a dash of punk-rock surprise—dishes famously riff on a central flavor—citrus salad with toasted sesame comes paired with a frozen margarita, candied grapefruit, and lemongrass sorbet.



Perry Street, New York, New York

176 Perry Street
212-352-1900; www.jean-georges.com
Nearest marina: North Cove or Surfside 3 – Chelsea Piers

Rhode Island

The Oar Block Island

A beloved institution that began as a temporary watering hole for the regatta in 1965, the casual restaurant and bar sit on the island's Great Salt Pond and take some sleuthing to find. But once you're there you'll be part of a festive crowd tucking into the expert lobster-club sandwiches, Black Angus blue-cheese hamburgers, and peel-and-eat shrimp. The entire ceiling is festooned with graffitied, painted oars



Block Island, Rhode Island

donated by regulars or besotted tourists, and the huge deck has fine views of the yacht-crammed marinas. New England microbrews and ice-cold Buds are all on hand, but folks in the know order the killer—and infamous—Mudslides.

Jobs Hill Rd., New Harbor
401-466-8820
Nearest marinas: Block Island Boat Basin 