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## *Top 10 restaurants, cafes and diners in Maine*

The area's famous for great lobster and other fishy delights but has much, much more to offer such as top Japanese noodles, a class food truck, sublime sandwiches, curry to die for and good old-fashioned steak

### **Mache Bistro, Bar Harbor**



A beacon of light amid a dark ocean of tourist traps, Mache Bistro is always my haven when visiting Bar Harbor. Originally trained in classic French cookery, chef Kyle Yarborough executes these concepts while incorporating influences from places as varied as Thailand and the American south. This results in dishes like sweet potato brandade with smoked duck, brown sugar and ancho chilli, which pairs just as well with copious amounts of white Burgundy as the original, salt-cod version. The decor, however, is classic bistro, complete with tables made from butcher's blocks and no tablecloths.

• 321 Main St, Bar Harbor, +1 207 288 0447, [machebistro.com](http://machebistro.com).

Mains \$19-\$25. Open Mon-Sat 5.30pm-9pm

## Miyake, Portland



Impeccable sushi is a really a thing of splendour, and it can take a lifetime, or longer, to master the preparation, even with access to the best-quality fish. Each bite of chef Masa Miyake's 10-piece omakase nigiri seems more pleasurable than the one before it, a result in part of his use of exceptional sushi rice. The restaurant's plush and modern interior is an ideal place to part with some of your hard-earned cash and pony up for the four-course *omakase* tasting menu, which features meat and produce from Miyake's own farm. It is worth noting that, despite having a multitude of options in their home cities, diners regularly make the journey from New York and Boston just to find a perch at the bar. • 468 Fore Street, Portland, +1 207 871 9170, [miyakerestaurants.com](http://miyakerestaurants.com). Four-course tasting menu \$50

## Small Axe Truck, Portland



In the midst of the "food truck trend", gimmicky names and hipster paint jobs are of very little consequence, as is the resumé of the cooks onboard. If I'm going to forgo air-conditioning and eat outside, standing up, I need to know that the product will be executed consistently and in a timely fashion. Owners Karl Deuben and Bill Leavy make good on that promise with offerings that range from Thai curry and rice bowls topped with tempura-fried flounder, to

sandwiches stacked high with *panelle* (a Sicilian-style chickpea fritter), creamy ricotta and pickled vegetables. The Smokestack Lightning Burger is an absolute must, with insanely flavourful cold-smoked beef, jack cheese, shishito pepper and gochujang ketchup. • *Breakfast: 122 Anderson Street, 7.30am-10.30am; lunch: 385 Congress Street, 11.30am-2.30pm, +1 207 400 9971, [smallaxetruck.com](http://smallaxetruck.com). Breakfast from \$3.50, lunch mains \$5-\$9*

## Eventide Oyster Company, Portland



It would be safe to say that, after a lifetime spent consuming all manners of chowder, oysters, lobster rolls and fried fish in [Maine](#), I have settled on Eventide to get my fix for all of them. Where else can you enjoy these foods alongside dishes like braised bluefish tail, razor clams in escabeche, or an enormous double-cut pork chop for two? The concrete bar, fused with sand from the nearby beach, makes a fine centerpiece in the small, brightly coloured dining room. I would highly recommend that you roll in with an entourage and work your way through the entire menu, while hammering a plethora of tiki drinks. • *86 Middle Street, Portland, +1 207 774 8538, [eventideoysterco.com](http://eventideoysterco.com). Mains \$10-\$22. Open daily 11am-midnight*

## Pai Men Miyake, Portland



It is not uncommon for patrons to get somewhat misty-eyed while describing the Tokyo Abura Soba, a decadent yet vegetarian bowl of hot ramen noodles, chilli paste, pickled cabbage, nori, and fresh egg

yolk that are mixed together into what I can only describe as Japanese carbonara. This is just the tip of the iceberg though: Pai Men offers a dizzying array of yakitori, sushi rolls, ramen bowls, and other mayo-laden izakaya-style favourites, not to mention one of the best brunches around. A massive, snaking aluminium sculpture runs overhead, accentuating the stacked wood, brushed metal and exposed brick decor. • *188 State Street, Portland, +1 207 541 9204, [miyakerestaurants.com](http://miyakerestaurants.com). Mains \$9-\$15. Open Mon-Fri 11.30am-midnight, Sat-Sun 9am-midnight*

### **The Black Birch, Kittery**



Whenever somebody refuses to believe that Kittery is one of my favourite places to eat, I promptly direct them to the Black Birch. The aesthetic of the space is that of a modern farmhouse, with polished concrete floors and reclaimed pine furnishings. The food runs the gamut from fried chicken and devilled eggs to what is probably the finest chicken-liver mousse I have ever tasted. Though the drink selection is thorough, the focus is on an extensive, ever-rotating selection of draught beers with a predilection for Maine's more prolific breweries, such as Oxbow. • *2 Government Street, Kittery, +1 207 703 2294, [theblackbirch.com](http://theblackbirch.com). Mains \$8-\$19*

### **Tulsi, Kittery**



Chef Raj Mandekar is a new breed of Indian cook, producing dishes that are delicate yet vivid and powerful in flavour. The overall warmth

of the dining room is enhanced by colours corresponding to the primary spices used in the cooking, as well as the nearly hypnotic aromas emanating from the kitchen. I have been known to eat two whole orders of the shrimp balchow, an unapologetically spicy sauté with roots in Goa, while attempting to save room for a bowl of chicken korma. Sweet and savoury Peshawari naan makes a perfect conduit for the remaining sauce, washed down with an ocean of cold rosé. • *20 Walker Street, Kittery, +1 207 451 9511, [tulsiiindianrestaurant.com](http://tulsiiindianrestaurant.com). Mains \$10-\$23.50. Closed Mondays, check website for opening hours*

### **Long Grain, Camden**



Nothing lulls me into a fitful sleep like listening to chefs prattle on about the quality of the ingredients they use and why that is of utmost importance. They won't get a pat on the back from me until I actually taste the difference in their cooking, and when I say chef Ravin "Bas" Nakjaroen truly elevates the quality of a cuisine traditionally associated with the food courts and hawker stalls of Bangkok, using the best of what Maine has to offer, I do so with a straight face. The minuscule dining room is simply decorated – with various antique cooking implements hanging from the walls – allowing for minimal distraction while ripping into a bowl of coconut soup with wild mushrooms and locally made Heiwa tofu. • *31 Elm Street, Camden, +1 207 236 9001. Mains from \$9. Open Tues-Sat 11.30am-9pm*

### **Long Lake Sporting Club, Sinclair**



Those who are brave enough to venture into the nether regions of Maine's Aroostook County, whether by car, boat, or snowmobile, will be rewarded with one of most unique and satisfying meals in the state. Upon arrival, you are seated in the bar/lounge area, where you will no doubt consume copious amounts of liquor to chase away the arctic cold before enjoying an order of shockingly good chicken wings as an appetizer, all the while watching locals dance and be merry. When your enormous hand-cut steak is done, you will be escorted through the lodge to a satellite dining room, where your food is ready and waiting on the table. It is worth mentioning that I would like my last meal on Earth to be at this restaurant. • 48 Sinclair Road, +1 207 543 7584, [longlakesportingclub.com](http://longlakesportingclub.com). Mains from \$18 (with lobsters subject to market price - check before you order). Open for dining Mon-Fri 5pm-9pm, Sat 4.30pm-9pm, Sun midday-8pm

### **Hoss & Mary's Tasty Grub, Old Orchard Beach**



I am completely over the term "food porn", yet the only way I can describe the chow at Hoss & Mary's is "smutty". It's as if they completely ignore any kind of food-related taboo, like the kind that says that you should never put crab rangoons on an enormous double cheeseburger or serve a dish called the "chicken poutine fiesta sub". The end results are always delicious, because, well, they kind of have to be! They do not serve alcohol, so pick up a 30-rack of Bud Heavy and take your "Double Dragon" sub, loaded with pastrami, shaved steak and nacho cheese, home to consume, away from prying eyes. • 27 West Grand Avenue, Old Orchard Beach, +1 207 934 2411. Mains from \$7.95. Open Weds-Sat 11am-8pm, Sun 11am-6pm

**Joe Ricchio** is a freelance writer and the host of web series **Off the Wagon**. He documents his nights out regularly on [foodcoma.me](http://foodcoma.me), and has contributed to such publications as **Bon Appetit** and **Maine Magazine**