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Maine Dining 2009

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DINING

Best Catch:

FISHERMAN'S CATCH, *Wells*

It's completely understandable why locals would rather keep the Cardinali family's off-the-beaten-path chowder and fish joint a secret. This salt-marsh-view restaurant is renowned for its light, crispy, fresh fried fish as well as for its generous lobster rolls—but don't even think about skipping dessert. The freshly baked blueberry pie is to die for. Entrées: from \$8.99. *134 Harbor Road. 207-646-8780; fishermanscatchwells.com (http://www.fishermanscatchwells.com)*

Best Seaside Twofer:

PIER 77 AND THE RAMP, *Cape Porpoise*

Upstairs is fine dining with spectacular harbor views; downstairs is a cozy pub decorated in a sports-bar motif (but without the blaring TVs). Culinary Institute of America-trained chef Peter Morency turns out classics with pizzazz (we love the seafood stew); his wife, Kate, keeps the dining areas running smoothly. And did we mention the views? Lunch and pub Entrées: from \$9. Dinner entrées: from \$18. *77 Pier Road. 207-967-8500; pier77restaurant.com (http://www.pier77restaurant.com)*

Best Picnic Lunch:

MICUCCI'S, AMATO'S, DUCK FAT, TWO FAT CATS BAKERY, DEANS SWEETS, RABELAIS, *Portland*

Here's the menu: A large slice of pizza (\$3.99) from Micucci's or an Italian sandwich (from \$3.29) from Amato's, paired with a milk shake (\$4) and fries (from \$4.25) from Duck Fat, plus a cookie (prices vary) from Two Fat Cats Bakery. Finish with a hand-dipped truffle (\$17.50 per box of eight) from Deans Sweets. All are within steps of one another on India and Middle Streets, in Portland's emerging East End foodie neighborhood. Dining alone? Add a good read from Rabelais, which specializes in food-related books. *Micucci's, 45 India St.; 207-775-1854. Amato's, 71 India St. 207-773-1682; amatos.com (http://www.amatos.com) . Duckfat, 43 Middle St. 207-774-8080; duckfat.com (http://www.duckfat.com) . Two Fat Cats, 47 India St. 207-347-5144; twofatcatsbakery.com (http://www.twofatcatsbakery.com) . Deans Sweets, 82 Middle St. 207-899-3664; deanssweets.com (http://www.deanssweets.com) . Rabelais, 86 Middle St. 207-774-1044; rabelaisbooks.com*

Best Proper English Tea:

JACQUELINE'S TEA ROOM, *Freeport*

Plan ahead and reserve a seat for a formal British tea, a two-hour, four-course indulgence served on fine china (\$25.50 per person). Choose from 76 teas to enjoy with finger sandwiches, scones topped with Devon cream, fruit jam, and lemon curd, and if that's not enough, dessert and sorbet. *201 Main St. 207-865-2123; jacquelinestearoom.com (http://www.jacquelinestearoom.com)*

Best Taste of Home:

WILD OATS BAKERY AND CAFÉ, *Brunswick*

Since 1991, Wild Oats has treated locals and visitors alike to scratch-made breads, soups, and pastries, as well as creative sandwiches, quiches, salads, and Entrées, including vegan choices. It's the place to pick up local news and gossip along with a smoothie, sticky bun, and java in the morning; to relax over lunch with a friend; or perhaps purchase a casserole (from \$11.95; serves 2-4 people) to reheat for dinner with biscuits or bread. *Tontine Mall, 149 Maine St. 207-725-6287; wildoatsbakery.com (http://www.wildoatsbakery.com)*

Best Summer Tradition:

JORDAN POND HOUSE, *Acadia National Park, Mt. Desert Island*

No visit to Acadia National Park is complete without afternoon tea on the lawn at the Jordan Pond House. Savor scrumptious popovers slathered with butter and jam—and heck, you're on vacation, splurge on ice cream, too (popover a la mode \$6.50)—all while drinking in the views over the pond to the Bubbles. You can always walk it off on the carriage roads afterwards. Call for seasonal hours. *Park Loop Road. 207-276-3316; jordanpond.com (http://www.jordanpond.com)*

Best Warm-Weather Treat:

MOUNT DESERT ISLAND ICE CREAM, *Bar Harbor*

MDI makes its decadently rich and creamy ice creams and sorbets in small batches, using fresh fruits and topnotch ingredients, and it's hard to say which are more creative, the names or the flavors. Possibilities include Hot Chili Chocolate, Neato Doritos, Girl Scouts Gone Wild, Scorned Woman, Pear Riesling, and Stout with Fudge. *7 Firefly Lane & 325 Main St. 207-288-0999, 207-288-5664; mdiic.com (http://www.mdiic.com)*

Best Haute Cuisine in the Boonies:

CANTERBURY ROYALE, *Fort Fairfield*

Trained chefs Barbara Boucher and Renee O'Neill have turned a little cottage way, way, way off the beaten path into an Old World European dining experience, decorating the two tables with silver, crystal, and china, and serving sublime six-course meals (from \$40). *182 Sam Everett Road; 207-472-4910*