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Summer ON THE WATER

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SWIMWEAR • SAILBOATS • GETAWAYS

AMERICA'S BEST
SEAFOOD
DIVES

CAPE ELIZABETH,
MAINE

DECORATE WITH
BLUE
OUR FAVORITE PAINT,
FABRIC & MORE

PLUS
HOW TO HOST
THE ULTIMATE
**SEASIDE
PARTY**

JUNE 2015



Fresh catch and
local ingredients at
Shoreline Beach Café

2015

America's Best **SEAFOOD DIVES**

BREAK OUT YOUR FLIP-FLOPS AND MEET US AT THE
COUNTRY'S TASTIEST OUTPOSTS FOR FRESH-CAUGHT,
BATTER-DIPPED, QUICK-FRIED, PLASTIC-CUP,
PAPER-NAPKIN FUN. **HUNGRY? WE THOUGHT SO**

Alabama

LeJeune's Market by the Bay

FAIRHOPE

Here's the shrimp po' boy of your dreams: plump, sweet catch hauled in from the Gulf, breaded and cooked so perfectly you'd swear someone just whispered the words "quick fry" to these beauties, mounded on ethereally light bread from Gambino's in New Orleans. It's the dish that launched this family-run spot (a second location is in neighboring Daphne), where you line up to order at the counter and then settle in at bright red booths with blue gingham tablecloths. Save room for the gumbo—according to the owners, only their grandma's is better; 251/929-7203 or marketbythebay.com. —Tracey Minkin

California

Shoreline Beach Café

SANTA BARBARA

They're not kidding about the "beach" part: Several tables here actually sit in the sand. Shoreline prides itself on serving fresh, healthful ingredients, mostly locally grown or harvested. Complexly flavored gems such as ceviche (the fresh catch of the day marinated in lime juice and *salsa fresca*) and Shoreline Seafood Soup (sea bass, halibut, or snapper with calamari, mussels, leeks, fennel, and onions) are standouts; 805/568-0064 or shorelinebeachcafe.com. —Steve Millburg

The Albright

SANTA MONICA

Is there a location more colorful than this one, smack-dab on the Santa Monica Pier? Nope. The Albright serves up everything from fresh lobster, Dungeness crab, fish-and-chips, and clam chowder to some of the best fish tacos and shucked oysters around. Boasting ingredients from the farmers' market along with craft beer and a fairly extensive wine list, The Albright caters to tourists and locals alike. After all, who doesn't like a round of Skee-Ball after a summer seafood feast?; 310/394-9683 or thealbright.com. —Liz Strong



Service with a smile at Shoreline Beach Café

Connecticut

Westfair Fish & Chips

WESTPORT

Westfair covers all of the clam chowder bases: New England (white), Manhattan (red), and Rhode Island (clear). This tiny storefront, with just five tables and half a dozen stools at a window counter, hides in a strip mall and caters mostly to nearby residents. Fried clams and fried oysters, both lightly battered, are especially tender and juicy; 203/255-3184 or westfairfishandchipsct.com. —S.M.

Florida

The Red Bar

SANTA ROSA BEACH

The decor looks as if someone ransacked a college dorm room back in the '90s:

mismatched furniture, old movie and concert posters on the walls. The menu—on a chalkboard carried from table to table—lists only a half-dozen or so items, depending on what's fresh that day. They're all great. That's why you usually have to wait for a table. But with live music and great sunsets, there's no rush; 850/231-1008 or theredbar.com. —S.M.

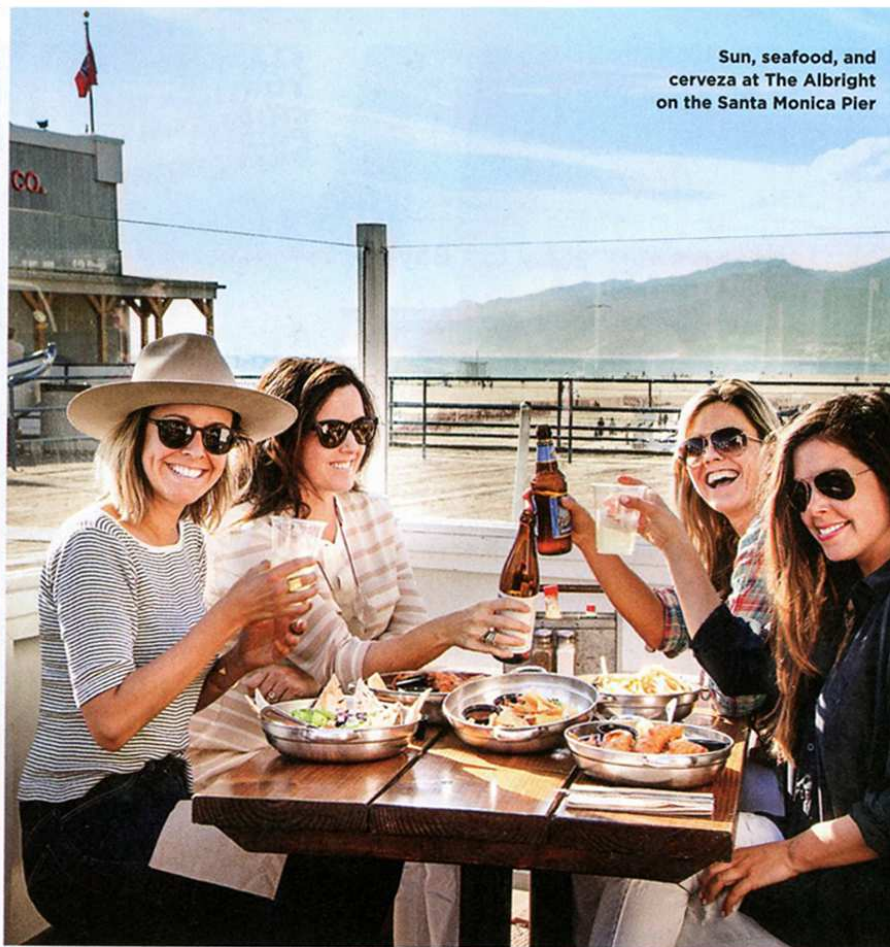
Half Shell Raw Bar

KEY WEST

Don't try to count all of the license plates that cover the walls of this sprawling former shrimp warehouse on the dock. Just take the bartender's word for it: There are two from every state. Then tuck back into some more briny and broad-shelled Gulf Coast oysters; mammoth, buttery-sweet peel-and-eat shrimp; and devilishly addictive fish dip, made from house-smoked local catch; 305/294-7496 or halfshellrawbar.com. —T.M.



Straight-from-the-Gulf delights dockside at Half Shell Raw Bar in Key West



Sun, seafood, and cerveza at The Albright on the Santa Monica Pier

Georgia

The Breakfast Club

TYBEE ISLAND

Why tout this little breakfast/lunch place when it serves only a handful of seafood dishes? Because those dishes are so good. During shrimp season (mid-June into January), the shrimp-and-grits alone are worth the trip to Tybee. Garlic and freshly grated Parmesan and Asiago cheeses perfectly complement the flash-cooked, fresh, local shrimp. Ask for a seat in the main room, where expertly frenetic cooks trade wisecracks with regulars; 912/786-5984 or thebreakfastclubtybee.com. —S.M.

Louisiana

Deanie's Seafood of Bucktown

METAIRIE

With its retro neon sign, Deanie's is a mecca for lovers of big plates and friendly service, and they come in droves. Local

kids' teams eat here, families celebrate reunions and birthdays here, and tourists looking for authentic eats make their way here, too. And what's not to love about a place that brings out a plate of boiled red potatoes instead of a bread course? The fried-fish platters are huge and tasty, the flavorful barbecue shrimp is legend, and the whole experience is a heartwarming slice of old-fashioned Louisiana life; 504/831-4141 or deanies.com. —T.M.

Maine

Bob's Clam Hut

KITTERY

You have to love a clam spot where two versions of the lightest fried clams on the Eastern Seaboard compete for customers' attention: the traditional house recipe and Lillian's, named for the cashier who challenged the restaurant's kitchen with her own recipe, which she was sure was better. You can order either, and it will arrive at your table with a bright little flag marking it as Bob's or Lillian's. With old-fashioned

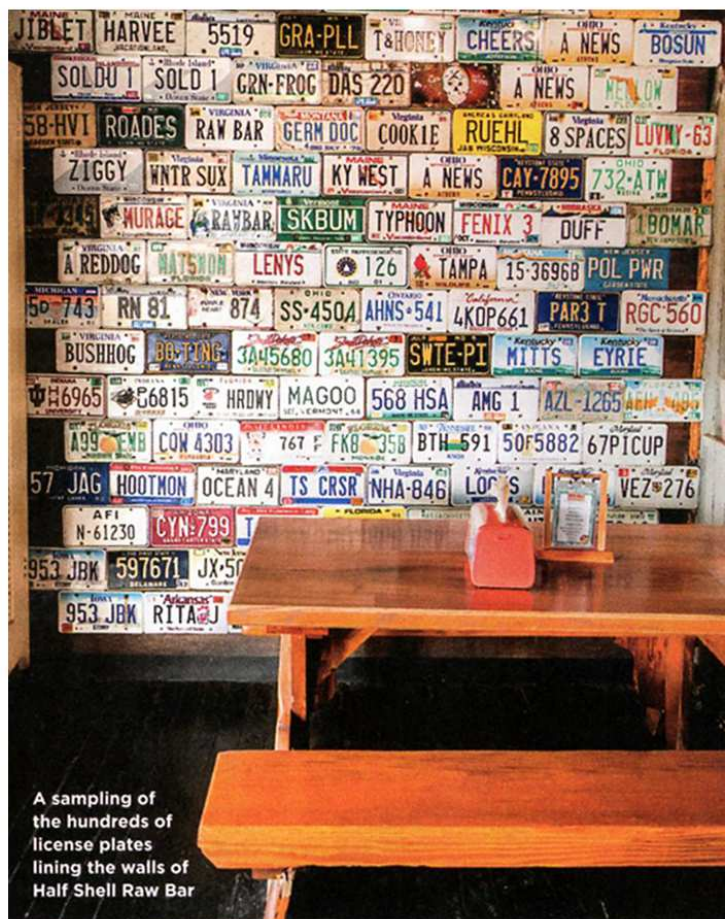
decor and a commitment to cooking to order, this landmark spot just north of the Maine/New Hampshire line marks for many travelers their first—and last—taste of Maine on either side of a vacation, and with good reason; 207/439-4233 or bobsclamhut.com. —T.M.

Maryland

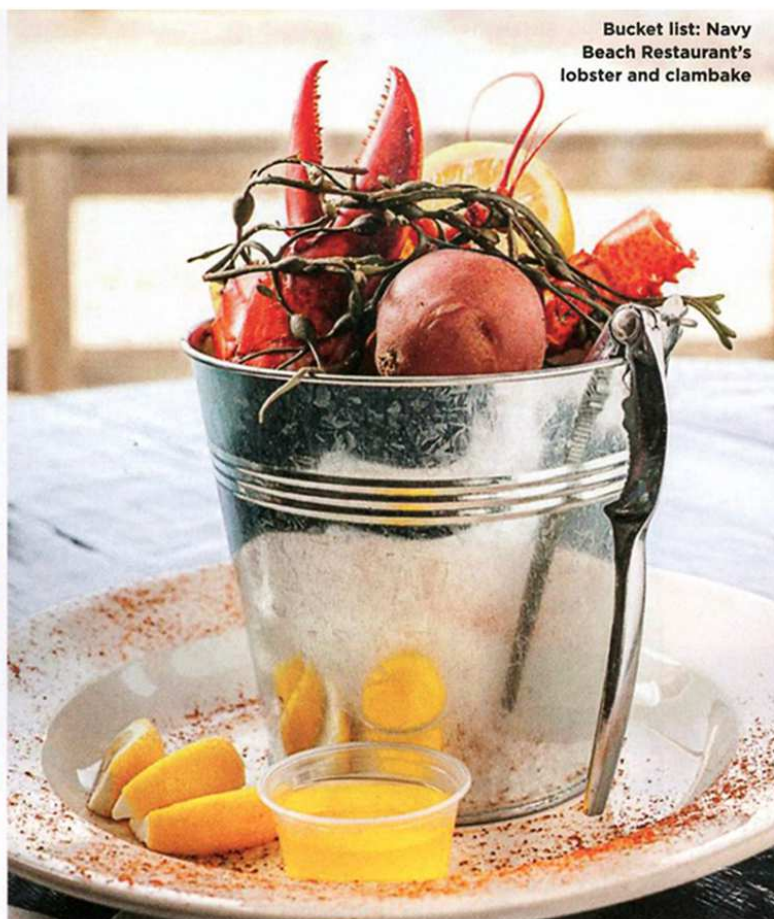
Mack's Bayside Bar & Grill

OCEAN CITY

Ocean City brings the bona fides as the home of this classic dive: The town proclaims itself "the white marlin capital of the world" and has an old-school boardwalk complete with funnel cakes and arcades. Combine that big-fish-meets-honky-tonk vibe with Mack's signature 32- or 64-ounce "Crushed Bucket" spin on Orange Crush soda (orange vodka, triple sec, freshly squeezed orange juice, and soda) and a half-pound of steamed shrimp Maryland style—with Old Bay—and you have a happy hour that's hard to beat; 410/732-5565 or mackys.com. —T.M.



A sampling of the hundreds of license plates lining the walls of Half Shell Raw Bar



Bucket list: Navy Beach Restaurant's lobster and clambake

Massachusetts

Alive and Kicking Lobsters

CAMBRIDGE

As with so many transcendent pleasures, the ingredients are deceptively simple: a quarter pound of warm, fresh-shucked lobster meat dressed with salt, pepper, and just a bit of mayonnaise between two buttered and toasted slices of scallion bread (a light, soft staple among Boston's Italian community). It's called a lobster sandwich, not a lobster roll, and it's reason enough to seek out this tiny seafood market. Round out your meal with the chowder of the day and a house-label soda; 617/876-0451 or aliveandkickinglobsters.com. —S.M.

Michigan

Captain Lou's

SOUTH HAVEN

Like a Midwestern flower, Captain Lou's blooms in mid-May and goes dormant by late September. In between, the party

stays hearty seven days a week, with live music on the deck each weekend. Captain Lou's sits along the Black River half a mile upstream from Lake Michigan, but its magic is pure Great Lakes. Here, a fish taco features lake perch that's Cajun battered and served with romaine lettuce, tomato, Cheddar cheese, sweet onion, and Cajun tartar sauce, plated with homemade chips and salsa. Unless it's raining, just about everyone hangs out on the deck, watching the boats go by and basking in the summer warmth; 269/637-3965. —S.M.

Mississippi

Rosetti's Café

BILOXI

Rosetti's occupies one corner of a giant poultry and seafood market, so freshness is a given. The gumbo—full of crabmeat, shrimp, and sausage lurking in a dark, richly flavored roux—is worth the adoration it inspires. The fried seafood can be a little heavy on the breading, but the juicy and tender fish, oysters, and other seafood

are worth every bite; 228/432-2146 or qualityseafoodmarketbiloxi.com. —S.M.

New Hampshire

Petey's Summertime Seafood and Bar

RYE

Petey's sits on an inlet, so decks, porches, and picnic tables provide breezy views of the Atlantic and a salt marsh. The restaurant boasts, "We catch our own lobsters," and the crustaceans show up all over the menu—which is just fine. Indulge in Baked Stuffed Lobster Pie 'n Butter, a sinfully rich New England specialty. The subtly flavored clam chowder makes for a great starter; 603/433-1937 or peteys.com. —S.M.

New York

Navy Beach Restaurant

MONTAUK

Start with a dark-and-stormy at the rustic bar. Outside, on the 200 feet of private

No frills, just fresh fare at
Petey's in New Hampshire



beach, relax on a lounge as you devour crispy calamari with piquant chili-garlic dressing. Then choose a picnic table or an indoor banquet for the epic sunset at laid-back Navy Beach, which plays host to families and celebrities alike. Wherever you drop anchor, dig into the creamy clam-and-corn chowder, followed by tender local scallops. Or crack open a Montauk Driftwood Ale and a meaty claw from the restaurant's famed lobster and clambake. Either way, order enough Parmesan fries to share; 631/668-6868 or navybeach.com.

—Margaret Heidenry

North Carolina

Channel Marker Restaurant

ATLANTIC BEACH

Perched at the island end of the Atlantic Causeway bridge linking Morehead City and Atlantic Beach, this dock-and-dine destination has killer views from its sunny deck overlooking Bogue Sound, as well as the restaurant's triangular red namesake. The menu includes excellent fried seafood and surprises, such as spicy bang bang shrimp or Buffalo shrimp and a fabulous sesame seared tuna appetizer; 252/247-2344 or thechannelmarker.com. —S.M.

Oregon

Ecola Seafoods Restaurant & Market

CANNON BEACH

Here's the word to remember: halibut. It comes in various preparations, including tasty fish tacos. But the star may be the simply delicious halibut fish-and-chips, which lets that Pacific Northwest, fresh-caught flavor shine through. Ecola also has a decent selection of craft beers; 503/436-9130 or ecolaseafoods.com. —S.M.

Rhode Island

Cap'n Jack's Restaurant

SOUTH KINGSTOWN

How many seafood dives have their own pastry chef on the premises? Which is to say, enjoy those huge clam cakes, fish-and-chips, and seafood pasta specials that this cute, family-owned spot on a coastal salt marsh (and a quick walk to the beach) is known for, but make sure to save room for the oversize and delicious apple and blueberry turnovers, as well as cakes, pies, and other confections; 401/789-4556 or capnjacksrestaurant.com. —T.M.

Texas

Dirty Al's Seafood Restaurant

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

Bright murals of Gulf Coast fish decorate the simple exterior, along with a hard-to-miss depiction of a guy, beer in hand, riding a swordfish like a bucking bronco. Inside, check out the simple paper menu printed on the back of the current month's tide tables. Then step up to the counter to order hole-in-the-wall goodness: a pound of boiled shrimp with New Orleans spice, Tex-Mex-style seafood tacos, or seafood baskets of all sorts; 956/761-4901 or dirtyalspi.com. —Jennifer Chappell Smith

Virginia

Yorktown Pub

YORKTOWN

Nosh on a grilled Maryland-style crab cake sandwich—a savory delight made with lump crabmeat and panko, from a secret family recipe—or order the oyster po' boy, slathered in a creamy, tartar-like sauce with a kick. The menu changes with the catch (fried softshell crab is a crowd favorite in summer), but there are two things you can always expect: ice-cold microbrews served in Mason jars and serene views of the York River from every seat in the house; 757/886-9964 or yorktownpub.com. —Marisa Spyker

Washington

OleBob's Galley Café

ILWACO

With its own seafood market, OleBob's (pronounced OH-lee-bobs) is all about the fresh catch and great marina views through big plate-glass windows. When staffers feel a need for "air-conditioning," they just prop open the door. That quirkiness extends to the café's excellent clam chowder. It's thinner than most Pacific Northwest-style chowders, with a nice accent of salt pork; 360/642-4332 or olebobs.com. —S.M. ■