



Clockwise from top left: The main attraction at Eventide Oyster Co., downtown water features, Portland Head Light, and a Vena's Fizz House Lumbersexual cocktail.

Port of Cool

Sea air and alfresco dining in Portland, Maine.

BY JEN ROSE SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIN LITTLE

GO FOR Perched where Maine fractures into myriad islands and inlets, Portland tucks a cosmopolitan clutch of cocktail bars, restaurants, and boutiques into a compact peninsula. Dry land's just the start: Historic schooners swan across **Casco Bay** past the **Calendar Islands**, once said to number as many as days in a year (the tally is up for debate). Marking southerly rock ledges is **Portland Head Light**, inspiration for artists including Edward Hopper, who rendered the landmark in a 1927 canvas. The **Portland Museum of Art** houses more of Hopper's wistful Maine depictions, as well as masterpieces by Winslow Homer and Andrew Wyeth that fairly glow with salt air.

EAT **Eventide Oyster Co.** (86 Middle Street) piles tender steamed buns with sweet lobster meat and velvety browned butter, a combo best paired with half-shell oysters chilled atop a 1,200-pound slab of pink Maine granite.

Farm-sourced small plates burnish a reputation for creative American cooking at **Central Provisions** (414 Fore Street), where warm evenings on the patio find locals sipping classic cocktails gone beachy, including a coconut negroni.

Maine potatoes are the key to the ultra-moist dough at **The Holy Donut** (194 Park Avenue and 7 Exchange Street). Elevated flavors – including chocolate sea salt and maple bacon – and vegan and gluten-free options grew this Old Port shop's cult following.

DRINK Craft beer is high art in Portland, but family-owned **Rising Tide Brewing Company** (103 Fox Street) keeps it casual. Sunny days mean pints of Mountainside IPA in an airy tasting room that opens onto an area with picnic tables.

Scandi-inspired **Portland Hunt + Alpine Club** (75 Market Street) mixes offbeat spirits into heady



Clockwise from top left: Campfire Pottery, fresh treats at Holy Donut, harbor pursuits, and Venn + Maker.



TIP

“Take the ferry to Peaks Island and rent bikes from Brad’s Bike Shop. There are various spots to stop and explore, and near the end of the ride you can stop at the water’s edge to cool off with an ocean swim.”

– Michelle Ferris, *Virtuoso travel advisor, Portland*

cocktails sporting clever descriptions. (The Cloudbreak’s coconut rum and Batavia arrack are “a ray of sunshine.”)

At **Vena’s Fizz House** (345 Fore Street), bartenders’ deft use of botanicals packs complex flavor into a colorful menu starring nonalcoholic drinks (and alcoholic ones too).

SHOP **Venn + Maker’s** owners (65 Washington Avenue) scout Maine studios for remarkable craftsmanship, stocking their boutique with favorite treasures. Dip-dyed rope harvest baskets by artist Lauren Beveridge are roomy enough to fill with maple syrup, wild blueberry jam, and Maine cheeses from the **Portland Farmers’ Market** (Deering Oaks Park, Wednesdays and Saturdays).

Sleekly reimagined shipping containers house small businesses at **The Black Box** (93 Washington Avenue), a boutique incubator. Two of its current tenants: **Campfire Pottery**, starring modern, homespun artistry, and **Mulxiplay**, whose jewelry and handbags are wearable reminders of Portland.

STAY Mile-long Crescent Beach is steps away from 61 rooms and private-entrance suites at **Inn by the Sea** in Cape Elizabeth, seven miles south of Portland. Here, creature comforts are planet friendly: Servers whisk sustainable Maine sashimi to a deck overlooking bobbing lobster boats; below, New England cottontails hop through restored thickets of bayberry and wild roses. And, best of all, guests can adopt the inn’s resident rescue pups. *Doubles from \$449, including a \$30 breakfast credit daily and a \$100 spa credit.*

Summer-camp nostalgia infuses 56 bungalows, cottages, and treetop lodges on 60 acres of forest at **Hidden Pond** outside Kennebunkport, a 29-mile drive south from Portland. The Tree Spa’s treatment rooms perch in a dappled birch grove, and families pedal cruiser bikes to nearby Goose Rocks Beach. Garden-fresh meals at Earth restaurant are served in a woodsy dining room or private dining areas secreted across the property. *Bungalows from \$549, including breakfast daily and a \$100 resort credit.* **VI.**