

DEPARTURES

The Best Al Fresco Dining in the US

By [Pat Doherty](#) on July 10, 2019

There's no better way to enjoy a meal than being surrounded by nature and great weather.

One of the pleasures of summer, especially in places where winters are cold and we anxiously await warm weather, is al fresco dining. Eating outside, [surrounded by fresh air, a light breeze, perhaps a skyline](#), ocean, or greenery view, somehow buoys the spirits and makes the food taste better. There's probably no scientific reason for that claim since our taste buds don't know if they're indoors or outside. But most of us have experienced the way food is influenced by external details: the restaurant décor, the dishes or flatware, the person we're dining with, even the conversation or occasion.

So, when summer rolls around, we want to dine in the great outdoors, whether it's at a campsite, on the beach, in a backyard, or on a park bench during lunch hour. Even better is being served an appetizing restaurant meal as we gaze at something other than the inside of the dining room. That's why outdoor tables are usually the first choice when offered at eating establishments during summer.

We have gathered al fresco dining suggestions from around the country. Some are personal favorites, others have been recommended by reliable friends, and several have come from Open Table's newly released list of "[100 Best Al Fresco Restaurants in America](#)." Whether you try one of these or find a favorite in your neighborhood or during your vacation, we wish you a perfect summer [al fresco dining experience](#).



Courtesy Newport Restaurant Group

The Boat House, Tiverton, Rhode Island

With its setting on a bluff overlooking Mt. Hope Bay, [Boat House](#) diners can watch sailboats, sunsets, and seabirds while enjoying New England seafood and local specialties. Their large outdoor patio is the place to be in summer, and their dock on the Sakonnet River is perfect for an after-dinner stroll. Oysters, chowder, lobster, crab cakes, mussels, scallops, and more will make seafood fans happy. Roasted chicken, grilled beef filet, and braised pork chop are also on the menu. There's a Maine lobster roll for those who can't let a summer pass by without one. Sunday brunch includes Newport Benedict and combination plate of eggs, bacon, Belgian waffle, and home fries named Sakonnet Sunrise for a local touch. This place offers an extensive cocktail, beer, and wine list with local brews and Vidal Blanc from a Rhode Island winery.