RI FOOD & DINING

How to eat through southern R.I. in a single weekend

The seaside offers a bounty of coastal dishes. Here are some great places to try.

By Lauren Daley Globe Correspondent, Updated June 12, 2022, 8:55 a.m.

Matunuck Oyster Bar owner Perry Raso shucks oysters that he recently harvested out of Potters Pond, which is where his restaurant is located, in South Kingstown, Rhode Island. MIKE LEPTEW

When it comes to dining in the Ocean State, hubs like Providence and Newport tend to get all the foodie love. But from fresh oysters to knee-buckling tacos, South County is an underrated gem.

Where to start? We got you.

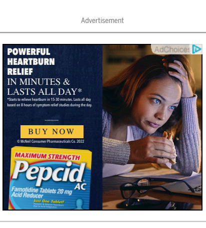
Here are a few classic restaurants to check out as you eat your way through South County.

COASTAL CABIN

Linger over brunch at Coastal Cabin. With bottomless mimosas and Bloody Marys ($15) you might tuck into crab-cake Benedict, fried chicken and waffles, caramelized scallop rolls, and seafood crepes. Fruit and smoked gouda hashbrowns are served with every dish.

Later in the day, pair a summer cocktail — maybe chili lime mango margarita, cucumber basil or grapefruit martinis, blackberry citrus old-fashioned — with an app: roasted oysters, pan-seared crab cake with avocado tomato salsa, or baked lobster ravioli. From 4 to 6 p.m. daily, you'll find half-priced apps, like fried capers or house meatballs with pineapple salsa. Summery dinner fare includes fresh berry salad with parmesan, grilled rosemary garlic swordfish, and caramelized scallops.

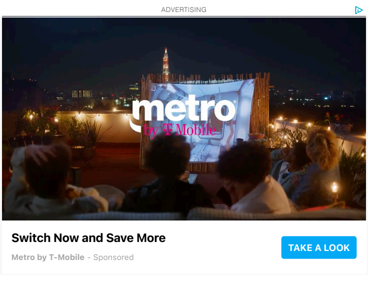
945 Boston Neck Road, Narragansett, 401-789-1725, coastalcabinri.com.

Advertisement


AMIGOS TAQUERIA Y TEQUILA

Vamos aquí por comida muy deliciosa.

Whether you're looking for breakfast burritos, post-work margaritas, or an authentic Mexican dinner in South County, visit Amigos Taqueria Y Tequila in Westerly.

ADVERTISING


Switch Now and Save More
Metro by T-Mobile - Sponsored
TAKE A LOOK

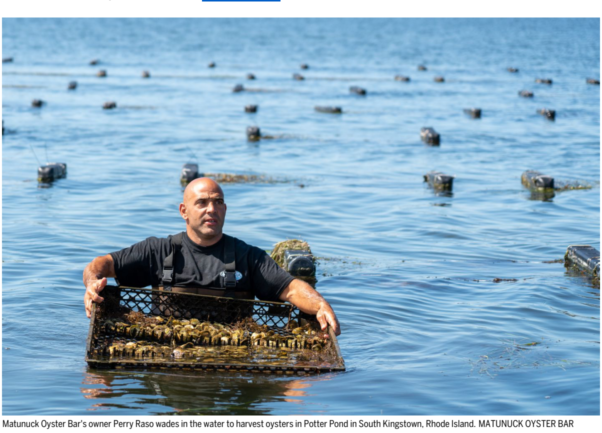
Breakfast and brunch are served with cornbread and Mexican rice and beans — or home-fries and toast, if you prefer. Think huevos rancheros with avocado, toquilla-cured smoked salmon with grilled house bread, lobster eggs benedict, a stuffed avocado, filled with poached eggs, cheese and salsa. Build-your-own omelet or tortilla wrap (maybe goat cheese, smoked salmon, avocado, chorizo, tofu, mozzarella); or fried plantain and cinnamon French toast; churro waffles rolled in cinnamon with dulce de leche, canola almond French toast or pancakes: blueberry, pumpkin or chocolate chip.

For afternoon drinks, you'll find tequila-forward cocktails, sangrias, and Mexican beers. Tapas may include lump crab and chipotle guacamole and chips, nacho casserole, "Matt's nacho fries" — French fries with nacho toppings and cheese sauce, mini chimichangas, mango habanera buffalo wing with avocado gorgonzola sauce, Corona-batter fish and chips with guava Cole slaw. Linger over seared ahi tuna tostada, seared scallops sautéed with cactus, banana leaf-wrapped salmon over plantain risotto, grilled salmon tacos with papaya cucumber slaw. For summer fiestas, take note: they cater.

Advertisement

POWERED BY CONCERT FEEDBACK

2 Canal St., Westerly, 401-315-5800, amigosri.com.


Matunuck Oyster Bar's owner Perry Raso wades in the water to harvest oysters in Potter Pond in South Kingstown, Rhode Island. MATUNUCK OYSTER BAR

MATUNUCK OYSTER BAR

For a sit-down dinner with waterfront ambience, Matuncuk Oyster Bar is a South County pearl. Overlooking Potter Pond where their oysters are harvested, Matunuck is truly pond-to-plate— and also farm-to-table. Some veggies and herbs — rosemary, sage, salad greens, carrots, kale, peas and more — are plucked from their nearby organic vegetable farm.

Owner Perry Raso started digging littlenecks in Point Judith Pond when he was 12, and grew up harvesting shellfish, eel trapping, bull-raking clams, and diving for steamers. Before he opened Matunuck Oyster Bar, he was an oyster farmer. After graduating from the University of Rhode Island, Raso studied aquaculture and fisheries technology. You can book an oyster farm tour, which includes a visit to the shellfish farm.

Matunuck Oyster Bar's boat heads out into Potters Pond in South Kingstown, Rhode Island to harvest oysters. MATUNUCK OYSTER BAR

Raso founded Matunuck Oyster Farm, and opened the restaurant in 2009. In 2011 he started growing organic veggies, and today, there's a shellfish hatchery.

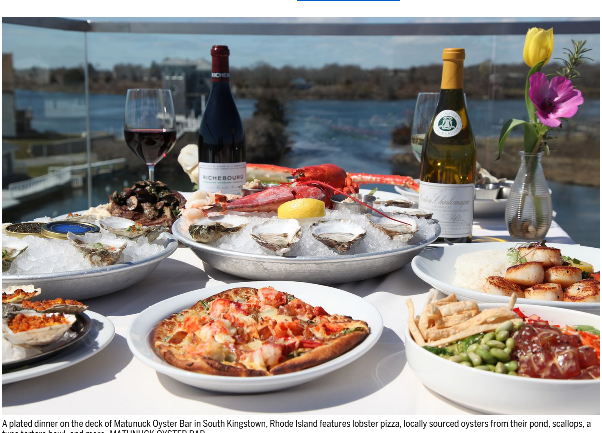
You might catch a summer sunset by the water while dining on the waterfront deck over littlenecks and cherrystones, or chilled lobster. Go with pals to "Pass the Tower" — an assortment of oysters, littlenecks, jumbo shrimp, chilled whole lobster, Point Judith crab, tune poke, and seaweed salad.

Advertisement

POWERED BY CONCERT FEEDBACK

Not a raw fan? Prepared shellfish includes mussels with white wine, herb butter, and garlic crostini, littlenecks and chourico; lightly fried oysters with cucumber avocado, remoulade mint. Try lobster pizza on Naan, house stuffies, Point Judith calamari, or quinoa crab salad. Sandwiches include a lobster roll and an oyster po' boy. Entrees may include Potter Pond poke bowl (yellowfin, edamame, sticky rice, crispy wonton, sesame tamari); seared scallops with local veggies; jambalaya with fried oysters, or linguine with Rhody littlenecks.

629 Succotash Road, South Kingstown, 401-783-4202, rhodyoysters.com.


A plated dinner on the deck of Matunuck Oyster Bar in South Kingstown, Rhode Island features lobster pizza, locally sourced oysters from their pond, scallops, a tuna tartare bowl, and more. MATUNUCK OYSTER BAR

GEORGE'S OF GALILEE

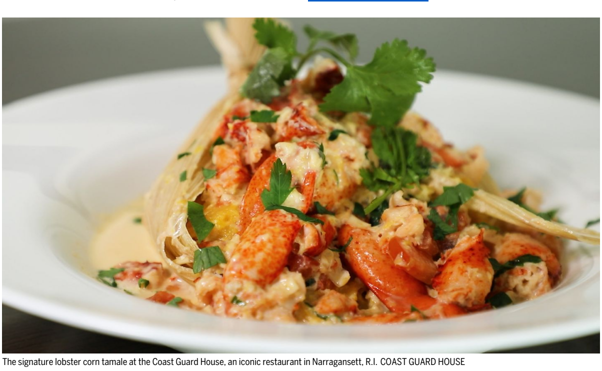
With views of Block Island Sound, George's has a long history in Rhode Island, opening in the first half of the 20th century.

Whether you're jonesing for sushi and eye-catching cocktails at their tiki beach bar, craving clam-cakes on the deck, or intrigued by sustainable seafood, George's menu — largely boat-to-plate — is extensive.

You might start with applewood bacon mussels with whole grain mustard, baked brie with an apricot cranberry jam, flash-fried calamari, or fried oysters with orange marmalade and cucumbers. House clam-cakes pair with either classic clear-broth Rhode Island clam chowder, or a creamy New England clam chowder (to satisfy all sides of the chowder debate.) Entrees include char-grilled salmon with a Jim Beam glaze, baked stuffed shrimp with herbed cracker stuffing, lobster truffle with sun-dried tomatoes, pulled chicken sandwich with agave barbecue, or a "Nine Napkin Burger" smothered with bourbon glaze, bacon, cheddar and fried onions.

Advertisement

250 Sand Hill Cove Road, Port of Galilee, 401-783-2306, georgesofgalilee.com.


The signature lobster corn tamale at the Coast Guard House, an iconic restaurant in Narragansett, R.I. COAST GUARD HOUSE

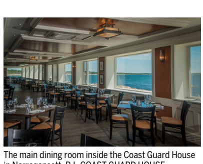
COAST GUARD HOUSE

Nestled by the ocean on a granite perch dating back to the 1800s, Coast Guard House is a long-time Rhody notable that's also scooped up Wine Spectator awards for their pages-long vino list.

The restaurant dates back to the 1940s, known for its views of Narragansett Bay. Take in the view over the lobster bisque, fried gnocchi, lobster corn tamale, or octopus salad. They're known for their seafood dishes, such as the swordfish with fregola, salon with rice noodles, lobster ravioli, and steam lobster dinner

40 Ocean Road, Narragansett, 401-789-0700, thecoastguardhouse.com.

OLYMPIA TEA ROOM

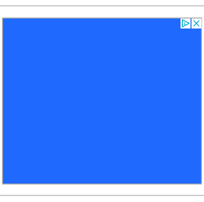

The main dining room inside the Coast Guard House in Narragansett, R.I. COAST GUARD HOUSE

In Watch Hill — yes, where Taylor Swift has a mansion — Olympia Tea Room throws down style from floor to ceiling. Founded in 1916, this gem and one-time soda shop offers sidewalk seating so you can people-watch over tuna sashimi, Venetian tagliolini, or baby-back ribs with Korean barbecue sauce. For entrees, par for the course: grilled sausage bruno, Portuguese baked haddock with spicy crushed tomatoes, lime chipotle shrimp. Oh, and they serve more than 100 wines, according to their menu.

74 Bay Street, Westerly, *401-348-8211, olympiatearoom.com.*

MONAHAN'S CLAM SHACK

For classic Rhode Island beach vibes — think lobster rolls, clam strips and clear chowder by the ocean, hit up Monahan's Clam Shack in Narragansett. This is your Ocean State postcard menu: clam-cakes and chowder, fries, onion rings, chilled lobster roll with mayo or a hot lobster roll, sautéed in drawn butter; clam strip rolls, fried fish tacos, fish and chips, clam strip dinner.

Advertisement


Originally opened by Joseph Monahan in the 1940s, the spot by the sea wall previously functioned as a gas station and dairy bar. Today, at the seasonal eatery, you might enjoy a coconut shrimp basket by a fire pit.

190 Ocean Road, Narragansett, 401-782-2524, monahansri.com.

Pan-fried buns from Jayd Bun, an authentic Chinese restaurant in South Kingstown, R.I. JAYD BUN

JAYD BUN

For authentic Chinese in South County, two words: Jayd Bun. The husband-and-wife owned and operated restaurant serves a menu based on the food chef Annie Parisi grew up with in Tianjin, China. Everything is made by hand, from the pan-fried pork buns with chive, ginger, scallion and sesame oil to the "Jayd fusion" — a tradition Chinese scallion pancake with "secret Jayd rub." For entrees, think Spicy pork-filled wontons, peanut butter noodle with chicken, perhaps jin jin dumplings or their Chinese beef patty.

1202 Kingstown Road, South Kingstown, 401-515-7900, jaydbun.us.

The housemade Queen Patricia's crab cake topped with jumbo crab meat at Twin Willows restaurant in Narragansett, Rhode Island. TWIN WILLOWS

TWIN WILLOWS

A go-to spot for live music, summer fare, water views, and cocktails on the deck. Think Point Judith calamari, clam-cakes, stuffies with chorizo, smoked haddock tacos with cucumber tomato salsa, shrimp BLT, blackened turkey burger with cranberry blue cheese, shrimp scampi with Vermont butter, paella with native littlenecks and blue mussels.

865 Boston Neck Road, Narragansett, 401-789-8153, twinwillowsri.com.

Lauren Daley can be reached at ldaley33@gmail.com. Follow her on Twiiter @laurendaley1.

Show comments

MORE ON GLOBE.COM

SPONSORED BY: STUDIO/B
Transform your home inside and out
Whether it's a fresh coat of paint or a full renovation, making improvements is always a smart move.

JAN. 6 HEARINGS: THE LATEST

LOVE LETTERS
At 30, men fall into three categories
I have always kept a very open mind to dating around age, race/ethnicity, professional background, geographic distance, etc., but I sense that I might just be better off taking a break from dating for a few years and picking up again in my mid-30s.