



fresh
roll

The Portland Lobster Roll

THE SCOOP:

The history of the lobster roll—a staple from Maine to Connecticut—revolves around its distinctive New England-style bun, which has flat sides and is open on top. Some say the bun was invented in the early 20th century, when a hot dog vendor ran out and improvised with toasted bread. Lobster rolls gained popularity sometime after World War II, although a Milford, Connecticut, restaurant, Perry's, was said to have a sign from 1927 to 1977 that read "Home of the Famous Lobster Roll."



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THE DISH:

The secret ingredient is 100% fresh lobster meat, including the knuckle, claw and tail, says Tony Quattrucci, kitchen manager at **DiMillo's Floating Restaurant** (www.dimillos.com; 207-772-2216), a former ferry docked in Old Port.

The Lobster Shack at Two Lights (www.lobstershacktwolights.com; 207-799-1677) in Cape Elizabeth, just outside Portland, serves lobster rolls two ways, says Martha Porch, whose family has owned the seaside landmark since 1969. The bun is lined with lettuce, packed with lobster meat and topped with a dollop of mayo, or the meat is bathed in warm, drawn butter. (The Lobster Shack will reopen for the season on March 28.)

Portland Lobster Company (www.portlandlobstercompany.com; 207-775-2112) takes a sparer

approach. "We keep it very, very basic," says general manager Ethan Morgan. "We use a little bit of lemon and some butter. No mayonnaise."

Other local hangouts are **Gilbert's Chowder House** (207-871-5636) and **Becky's** (www.beckys.com; 207-773-7070).

THE TWIST:

Chefs who tweak the original often ditch the bun in favor of more sophisticated bread.

Eve's at the Garden (www.portlandharborhotel.com; 207-775-9090), located in the Portland Harbor Hotel, heaps fresh lobster meat on a brioche and tops it with St. André cheese, similar to brie. Want the lobster without the bread? Chef Jeff Landry splashes sweet lobster, shaved fennel, cucumbers and oranges with a white truffle vinaigrette.

A similar route is taken at the **Robinhood Free Meetinghouse** (www.robinhood-meetinghouse.com; 207-371-2188) in nearby Georgetown, where Chef Michael Gagne replaces the roll with his award-winning 72-layer cream cheese biscuits and adds mango for a refreshing finish.

Black Point Inn (www.blackpointinn.com; 207-883-2500), in Scarborough, uses lemon aioli to create a signature lobster roll. The landmark eatery has also served lobster BLTs with basil aioli. Also try the Thai-inspired dish at dinner; lobster is sautéed with coconut milk, ginger, lemongrass and Thai basil.



Eve's at
the Garden

