

Your monthly guide to the best of Nova Scotia's culinary scene



Featuring Anna Olson, host of Food Network's *Fresh with Anna Olson* cooking show, who will appear on stage to create unique meals using her mantra "eat fresh, eat local".

## We're hooked on fresh Nova Scotia seafood

At [eDining.ca](http://eDining.ca) we never miss an opportunity to celebrate the wonderful food our region offers, so we're getting really excited about the first annual **Nova Scotia Seafood Festival**, coming up this June 27-28 at the Cunard Centre in Halifax. This premier showcase will feature loads of special events and tasty activities. Let your tastebuds explore a world of seafood at the Seafood Grand Tasting Room and participate in wine and seafood pairing events. Learn great new recipes from famous foodies like Anna Olson, host of Food Network's *Fresh with Anna Olson* show, who will appear on stage to create unique meals using her mantra "eat fresh, eat local." And be sure to check out the thrilling "Chef vs Chef" culinary competition. It's a weekend of sensory delights featuring the seafood Nova Scotia is famous for. For tickets, details, recipes and more, visit [novascotiaseafoodfestival.ca](http://novascotiaseafoodfestival.ca).



Can't wait for June 27th? The **Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia** and CATCH are teaming up to introduce a new Dine Out Nova Scotia program, which will run June 14 to 26 as a lead-in to the seafood festival. Restaurants across Nova Scotia will be showcasing their culinary expertise with fresh seafood, by offering "Ocean-to-Plate" three-course dinner meals with a fixed price point of \$35, \$45 or \$55. Keep watching the website for updates as the [list of participating restaurants](#) grows!

Where did you hear the latest foodie chatter?

A little bird told me!

Follow eDining on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/eDining>



And of course, you can always check out [videos](#), access hundreds of fabulous [recipes](#) and browse through Nova Scotia [restaurant listings](#), all at [eDining.ca](http://eDining.ca)!

## Digging sustainable seafood treasures

From the muddy flats of the Bay of Fundy to the sandy Eastern Shore, Nova Scotia's 8,000-odd kilometres of coastline shelter an abundant source of sustainable seafood. Burrowed just under the sand, silt and mud of beaches, bays and estuaries, several species of clam can be found. These clams are not only delicious, they are versatile and sustainable with great potential to support coastal livelihoods.



Conducted with hand tools on coastal mud flats around the province, clamming has changed little over the years. Hard working clambers look for the small belly-button shaped indentations that broadcast clam locations during low tides, collecting their finds in buckets. This artisanal inshore fishery continues to be an important source of food and income in many coastal communities, and contributes up to \$9 million to Nova Scotia's economy every year.

Juicy, tender and flavourful, Nova Scotia hand-dug clams are also affordable in these lean economic times. Often found in local pubs, deep fried and served with french fries, these bivalved treasures are also fabulous steamed and dipped in melted butter. They dress up chowders, are scrumptious in pasta and can be variously baked, stuffed, barbequed or pureed into a dip. For more adventurous types, fresh hand-dug clams can also be slurped live from their pearly half shells, seasoned with a touch of lemon and pepper.

Ask your seafood suppliers if they can order in local, hand dug clams from open beaches. Just before cooking, rinse clams and then soak in fresh water for 20 to 40 minutes. As the fresh water filters through, the clams expel any remaining salt water and sand from their shells.



Afterwards, just steam, bake or roast for 2 to 4 minutes until the shell opens, or shuck, batter and fry – then dig in!

[Continue reading about NS hand-dug clams »](#)

[Click for a fabulous recipe for Nova Scotia clam chowder »](#)

## Get comfortable

Just about the biggest food trend around right now is the return of comfort food. Let's face it: when the worldwide credit crunch is making everyone uneasy, a serving of creamy scalloped potatoes or cheesy macaroni somehow makes us all feel better for a while.

Yes, comfort food – incorporating retro, nostalgia, and the feel-good foods of the past – has hit Nova Scotia restaurants. But that doesn't mean same-old, same-old. In fact, local chefs are using their creativity to transform less expensive cuts of meat into tender morsels, layering local, seasonal flavours, and throwing a gourmet curve onto old favourites.



Are you hungry for some nostalgia? Try the Nova Scotia lamb stew with bread and butter dumplings ([Durdy Nelly's, Halifax](#)), chicken-fried steak with mashed potatoes ([Fid, Halifax](#)), French onion soup ([Gabrieau's Bistro, Antigonish](#)), bread pudding with rum sauce ([Chanterelle Inn, Beddeck](#)), or spaghetti and meatballs with a frothy root beer float ([The Armview, Halifax](#)). Mmmm... we bet you feel better already!



## Spring Flavours

Take inspiration from the Taste of Nova Scotia culinary competition, right, and make your own springtime feast. Search your local market for fresh Nova Scotia lamb, tender asparagus spears and maple syrup.



Local maple syrup is delicious drizzled over plain yogurt with a few toasted walnut pieces, or try making your own maple butter ([click for recipe](#)); it's divine slathered over warm toasted brioche. Of course,

maple isn't just for dessert or breakfast. It adds a warm hint of sweetness to many savoury dishes and main courses, and partners particularly well with Nova Scotia salmon. This [recipe for Maple Salmon Fillets](#) couldn't be easier, or more elegant (see photo above). Paired with steamed asparagus, this meal is spring flavour at its best.

For a special-occasion dinner, serve a delicious [Dijon-crusted leg of lamb](#) (pictured bottom right) accompanied by [roasted asparagus with thyme](#). Or click to [peruse eDining.ca's lamb recipe collection](#).



## Chef Renée Lavallée on the Cutting Edge

During the three days of Saltscapes Expo last weekend, 10 of Nova Scotia's premier chefs faced off on the culinary stage and executive chef Renée Lavallée of the Five Fishermen restaurant took home first prize on April 26. Chef Lavallée — pictured above — was given just 45 minutes to create plates for the judges and samples for the audience using a black box of ingredients including local maple syrup, spring asparagus and lamb. These star ingredients all came from local Taste of Nova Scotia suppliers.

Chef Lavallée had some stiff competition, including Michael Howell (Tempest Restaurant), Shaun Zwarun (DesBarres Manor Inn), Dennis Johnston (FID Resto), Earlene Busch (Chanterelle Country Inn), Collin Stone (O'Carroll's), Terry Vassallo (Trattoria della Nonna), Peter Welton (Port Pub & Bistro), Alan Crosby (White Point Beach Resort) and Rick Ogilvie (The Tin Fish).

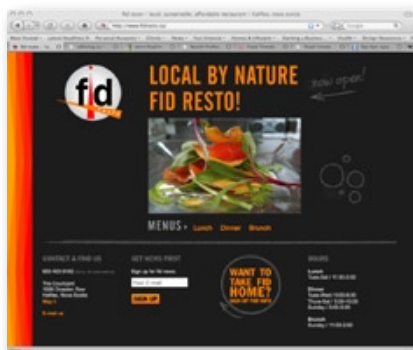
The competition was a delicious way to promote [Taste of Nova Scotia](#) restaurants, chefs and producer products.

[Read more about the competition »](#)



## Local by Nature

Fid has reopened with a fresh new look, new name and new approach to fine dining. At his Local By Nature Fid Resto, Chef Dennis Johnston still focuses on splicing together unexpected flavour combinations, but now he's set his sights on sourcing as many ingredients as he can from local artisanal suppliers — the warm mushroom tart with Fox Hill aged cheddar and local goose prosciutto with sour pickles are both great examples. Be sure to [check out Fid Resto's new website](#), and the renovated dining room on Dresden Row in Halifax.



## Chedabucto Bay Lobster Festival

It's lobster season on Chedabucto Bay, the largest bay on the Nova Scotia Atlantic Coast and [DesBarres Manor Inn](#) in Guysborough is hosting a Chedabucto Bay Lobster Festival to give people a taste of the Authentic Seacoast.

The festival includes lobster cooking classes with award winning chef Shaun Zwarun, trips to the wharf with the chef to meet the lobster boat, lobster and wine pairing classes and traditional Nova Scotia lobster suppers.

There's something happening every day from May 1 to June 30 inclusive so [visit the Inn's website for details](#).

## Joe's Dinner Club

Joe's Warehouse Restaurant is launching its new Beer & Wine Dinner Club on May 26. Enjoy a fantastic evening of great food and drink and learn how they work together to deliver a culinary experience like no other. This inaugural dinner club event includes a four-course tasting menu featuring Chilean seafood hot pot, scallop ceviche, New Zealand lamb chops and twisted osso bucco. Each course is paired with fantastic wines (tasting notes provided by Bishop's Cellar) that will open your eyes and palate to a new appreciation for food and drink.

The event takes place May 26 at [Joe's Warehouse](#) on Charlotte Street in Sydney. Tickets are \$40 plus tax and gratuity. Space is limited, though, so call 902-539-6686 to purchase your tickets today!

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