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Anthony's Italian Kitchen, offers home-made Italian cooking using the freshest ingredients, featuring favorites such as pizza, pasta, and sandwiches. Voted "Best in Portland" for three years. Dine-in and catering services on offer. Beer and wine available. Open 11-8 Mon. through Sat. 151 Middle St #5, Portland; and new location Cumberland County Courthouse, 205 Newbury St. anthonyssitaliankitchen.com, 774-8668.

Barnacle Billy's, known for luxury lobster, steamed clams, large lusty drinks, barbecued chicken, homemade clam chowder & of course, the lobster roll & lobster stew. Features extensive indoor & sundeck seating where guests can enjoy both the beauty of the harbor & the ocean beyond. Perkins Cove, Ogunquit, 646-5575, barnbilly.com

Bayside American Café (formerly Bintliff's) owned and run by Joe & Diane Catoggio since 2003. The menu includes delicious items like house-made smoked salmon, corned beef hash, crab cakes, sandwiches, salads, Benedicts, and more. Come and discover why customers love Bayside American Café. Breakfast, brunch, and lunch are served daily starting at 7 a.m. 98 Portland St., Portland, 774-0005 baysideamericancafe.com.

Benkey sushi bar and Japanese restaurant is back! At our new location on 16 Middle Street, chef Ando has designed an authentic Japanese culinary experience close to Portland's waterfront. Full bar and menu including premium sushi, sashimi, and rolls. Monday-Friday: Lunch, 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Dinner: 5 p.m. - close. Saturday - Sunday: 11:30 a.m. - close. 773-5555, sushman.com

BlueFin North Atlantic Seafood restaurant in the Old Port harnesses all that Maine is, and positions it into a delicious dish. Executive Chef Tim Labonte creates new and unexpected meals using fresh, locally-caught seafood and seasonal ingredients at their peak. From breakfast through dinner, your next adventure may just be your next dish. 468 Fore Street Portland's Old Port 775-9090 portlandharborhotel.com

Bolster, Snow & Co., is located in the spectacularly reincarnated brick mansion, The Francis (formerly the Mellen E. Bolster House). With executive Chef Nicolas Verdisco at the helm, Bolster Snow provides guests with warm, genuine hospitality, gracious service, and fiercely seasonal food and drink that are representative of the Northeast Region. 747 Congress St. Portland, 772-7485, thefrancismaine.com

Bruno's Voted Portland's Best Italian Restaurant by Market Surveys of America, Bruno's offers a delicious variety of classic Italian, American, and seafood dishes—and they make all of their pasta in-house. Great sandwiches, pizza, calzones, soups, chowders, and salads. Enjoy lunch or dinner



Sushi, Chic and Sleek

Benkay relocates to a brand-new corner in the East End.

BY CLAIRE Z. CRAMER

OPENING IN 1997, **Benkay** led the pack that transformed Portland into city full of excellent Japanese restaurants. A move this January from Commercial Street to a gleaming storefront in the condo canyon that's risen just east of India Street has brought a bright new luster to an old favorite.

We're led to a window table overlooking Middle Street. Micucci's and Lois' Natural Marketplace may be just around the corner, but we might as well be in another city, so new and unfamiliar are the surrounding buildings. And what's been lost (a harbor view) has been made up in improved interior design.

The new Benkay is handsome and minimalist, with simple wooden tables, chairs, and benches. A long sushi bar adorned with colorful seafood and garnishes is presided over by four sushi-men.

We begin with saki samplers. Our server brings a flight of three dry sakes in small glasses on wooden trays (\$10 per flight). We sample Ozeki brand Yamadanishiki and Karatamba Honjoro, and Hakushika Chokara. The first sip of Yamadanishiki is cool and bright, and we enjoy comparing

subtle differences throughout dinner.

The menu here is huge, our server's input welcome and excellent. She advises the pork gyoza over the shrimp shumai. The pan-fried gyoza are hot and fragrant with ground pork and cabbage, noticeably tastier than most pork dumplings (\$8). Seaweed salad—fine shreds of bright green kelp and thin strips of



dark nori—is subtly tart and well dressed (\$6).

From the daily-special chalkboard above the sushi bar, we choose Tai snapper. A dainty pair of nigiri—pieces of light, flounderlike fish set on bite-size disks of sushi rice—is delicious with a dip in soy sauce (\$8).

Two of Benkay's enduringly popular ma-

ki roll selections are beautifully presented on a speckled pottery platter, complete with floral-like arrangements of shaved, pickled ginger and wasabi paste garnishes. Maine Rolls (8 pieces) salutes with fresh, cooked lobster, asparagus, and cucumber (\$11). The signature Benkay Rolls (\$10) invites with spicy raw tuna, tempura-fried before being sliced into pieces and enrobed in a cloak of creamy wasabi sauce. Rich, decadent, and completely irresistible.

The menu has pages of assorted sushi and maki-rolls; cooked entrees with pork, chicken, or tofu; and tempura of both seafood and vegetables. At a nearby table, we spot a platter piled high with feather-light shrimp tempura under siege by four diners' chopsticks.

We conclude the feast with simple Hamachi yellowtail rolls. The dark, strong raw fish is the perfect foil for the last of the ginger and wasabi.

Benkay's 21-year run is proof that gloriously fresh seafood and excellent service will never go out of style. ■

Benkay, serving lunch Mon. - Fri. from 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. and dinner 5 p.m. - close, Sat. & Sun. 11:30 a.m. - close; 16 Middle St., Portland; 773-5555; sushiman.com

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DINING GUIDE

in the dining room or the Tavern. Casual dining at its best. 33 Allen Ave., 878-9511.

Bull Feeney's Authentic Irish pub & restaurant, serving delicious from-scratch sandwiches, steaks, seafood & hearty Irish fare, pouring local craft & premium imported brews, plus Maine's most extensive selection of single malt Scotch & Irish whiskeys. Live music five nights. Open 7 days, 11:30 a.m. - 1 a.m. Kitchen closes at 10 p.m. 375 Fore St. 773-7210, bullfeeneys.com.

Congress Bar and Grill Serving Portlanders delicious food and beers for years! Fully embrace Portland's laid back, no frills attitude. Try Thai chili wings and the best fries in the city while vintage game shows play on-screen. Happy hour everyday 4 p.m.- 6 p.m. & 10 p.m. - 12 a.m. Late night menu Fri & Sat. Open 7 days, 11:30 a.m. to 1 a.m., 617 Congress St., Portland 828-9944

El Corazon Mexican food from the heart. Authentic family recipes passed down through generations, plus an "oversized tequila selection." Try Portland's own "Marisco" - a Mexican seafood cocktail of shrimp, bay scallops, clams, octopus, and, naturally, Maine lobster. Open lunch and dinner, Mon.-Thur. 11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.; Fri.-Sat. till 11:00 p.m.; Sun. 9 a.m.-9 p.m. 190 State St. Portland. elcorazonportland.com, 536-1354

The Corner Room features bright, wide-open space complemented by handcrafted woodwork. Patrons can expect a warm, comfortable atmosphere, marked by the rich aromas of house-made pastas, pizzas, antipasti and artisanal breads. Enjoy the taste of Venice in the heart of Portland, ME! 879-4747, 110 Exchange Street. Visit the-cornerroomkitchenandbar.com.

Fish Bones American Grill offers creatively prepared American cuisine along the canal in the historic Bates Mill complex in the heart of downtown Lewiston. Open seven days, offering dinner Monday through Sunday, lunch Monday through Friday, and brunch on Sundays. Come get hooked at 70 Lincoln Street, Bates Mill No. 6! fishbonesmaine.com, 333-3663.

Hurricane Restaurant is open for the season! New England cuisine with an international twist. Local produce and seafood, full bar, award-winning wine list, in-house dessert chef. Nurturing the seacoast palate for over 25 years. Good restaurants come and go, great restaurants get better and better. Reservations suggested. 29 Dock Square, Kennebunkport. 967-9111, hurricanerestaurant.com

J's Oyster is a premier seafood destination and locals' favorite with indoor and outdoor waterfront seating on one of Portland's

scenic piers. Established in 1977, J's offers classic favorites and friendly service. Coastal Living claimed J's one of "America's Best Seafood Dives 2016." Find us on Facebook. 772-4828

Maria's Ristorante is Portland's original classic Italian Restaurant. Greg and Tony Napolitano prepare classics like Zuppa de Pesce, Eggplant Parmigiana, Grilled Veal Sausages, Veal Chop Milanese, homemade cavatelli pastas, Pistachio Gelato, and Maine's Best Meatballs. Prices \$11.95 - \$22.95. Tue.-Sat. starting at 5 p.m. Catering always available. 337 Cumberland Ave. 772-9232, mariasrestaurant.com.

Pearl Kennebunk & Spat Oyster Cellar is Chef Rebecca Charles's (of Pearl Oyster Bar, New York) newest restaurant. Enjoy elevated beach food, including Charles's famous reinvention of Maine's lobster roll. Happy Hour on Wed., Thurs., and Sun. from 5 p.m. - 6 p.m. for \$1 oysters, \$5 wines, and well cocktails! 27 Western Ave. Kennebunk. pearloysterbar.com/pearl-maine/. 204-0860

Pedro's focuses on simple yet full-flavored Mexican and Latino food. Offering tacos, burritos and an impressive array of margaritas, sangria, beer, and wine. *Especiales de la semana* (specials of the week) keep the menu varied and fresh and showcase different Latino cultures. Seasonal outdoor dining available. Open daily, 12 p.m. - 10 p.m. 181 Port Rd., Kennebunk, pedros-maine.com. 967-5544

Portland Lobster Company Experience "Maine's Best Lobster Roll," lobster dinners, steamers, fried claims, chowder, and more before visiting our outdoor bar for an ice-cold local beer or a glass of fine wine. Then relax on our deck overlooking the gorgeous Portland Harbor while listening to daily live music. 180 Commercial Street, 775-2112 portlandlobstercompany.com

Ricetta's Brick Oven Ristorante, a Maine Italian favorite since 1989. Experience a modern, family-friendly atmosphere with a versatile menu filled with award-winning brick oven pizzas, pasta, grill, and Italian entrees, using as many locally sourced ingredients as possible, plus gluten-free options. Sunday - Thursday 11:30 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Friday & Saturday: 11:30 a.m. - 10 p.m. 240 U.S Route 1, Falmouth. 781-3100.

Twenty Milk Street welcomes diners with warm, intimate décor and a lovely brick fireplace. Located in the Historic Portland Regency Hotel, we offer Sunday brunch, breakfast, lunch, and dinner, specializing in modern American dishes with a New England flourish. We're proud to serve local produce, seafood and beef, pork, chicken, and turkey from our own farm! 774-4200.

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