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Mash Tun on Wharf Street dishes up casual and affordable fare late into the night.

MIDNIGHT FEASTS

Not ready to call it a night? These **late night drinking and dining** options extend your festivities into the small hours.

BY SARAH MOORE

SOME EVENINGS you simply want to put on pajamas and slip into bed at a time that would've been considered a punishment during your middle-school years. Then there are those other nights. Nights when the glittering possibilities of the city stretch out, enticing you to visit just one more bar, buy just one more round of drinks—all in search of

those indelible moments or chance meetings with strangers. When these improbable solar flares of energy strike, embrace the feeling and stay out past bedtime.

Portland's one a.m. closing time may irk the city's hedonists and party-goers who crave an all-night session, but there are still plenty of places to enjoy a **late-night snack** and a **last call** before you take it home for

an after party.

WHARF STREET SANCTUARY

Once you've danced yourself into a parched and ravenous state at one of Wharf Street's less salubrious nightclubs, extract yourself from the dance floor and indulge in a calming drink and snack before you head home. Just a short walk along the cobbles you'll



discover the inviting facade of **Mash Tun**. Pushing a British pub-style vibe, Mash Tun has ample seating along its long bar or at one of the many wooden picnic tables scattered across its two rooms. Your nightcap options range from \$8 cocktails like Dark & Stormy to a glass of \$7 Prosecco, but beer is where this bar really applies itself. Check out the large chalkboards on the rear wall, where most of Maine's breweries are well represented. Take note: Many draft pours are only 12 oz. and cost anything from \$6-\$8 dollars. But at this point, you've probably had enough already anyway. The food, on the other hand, is reasonably priced and

portioned and exactly the kind of thing your pre-hangover brain is craving. Settle into a picnic bench with your friends and close out the night with a simple grass-fed beef burger (\$6), a side of fried Brussels sprouts with bacon, and a refreshing glass of Allagash. Serving until 1 a.m.

ONE AND DONE

If you couldn't drag yourself away from the band at **Bull Feeny's** before closing time, you're still in luck. **Blue Rooster**, a longtime refuge for the Old Port's tipsy, hungry masses, is open until 2 a.m. On certain nights the line snakes onto the sidewalk of Dana Street, its occupants carousing and flirting as they wait for their or-



Mash Tun on Wharf Street.

der of signature Blue Rooster tater tots. The eatery doesn't have an alcohol license, so instead enjoy a Po Boy and a side of Thai Tots, a surprise delight of Thai chili peanut sauce, scallions, and cilantro. There's limited seating inside, but honestly, this isn't a Michelin-star dining experience; it tastes just as good out of your lap on the Uber ride home.

Blue Rooster Food Co. draws the Old Port's revellers for post-party sandwiches and snacks like Tater Tot Poutine (inset left).



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LATE NIGHT DELIGHT

More of a fan of rock and roll than chart hits? Avoid the Old Port like the plague? Then you're probably more likely to be found thrashing the dance floor at **Geno's Rock Club** to the likes of Soul Remnants (October 13) or Primitive Man (November 3), or sinking a PBR under the red neon glow at **Downtown Lounge**. Whatever your tastes, who can say no to half-price sushi rolls? While we mourn the hiatus of Benkay on Commercial and India Street (reopening at 16 Middle Street any day now), **Kushiya Benkay**, the Congress Street sister location, still serves the ever-popular Rock 'n' Roll Sushi menu. This busy, buzzing joint can satiate

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PORTLAND AFTER DARK



Taco Escobarr on Congress proves a good pit stop before heading down to Wharf Street.

your late night hunger pangs until 2 a.m. from Thursday to Saturday. Keep the fire burning with pitchers of sake, ice-cold Thai beers, or the infamous scorpion bowls—on sale for \$10. The novelty 40-oz. vessels, complete with neon bendy straws, are reminiscent of spiked punch at a school dance—as likely to give you a sugar buzz as an alcohol buzz. Next up, you'll grab a pencil and start filling out a little menu scorecard, selecting which of the many sushi-rolls options you want to indulge in. At only \$3.50 for sushi rolls and \$2 for skewers, you can get pretty enthusiastic with your “scorecard” without breaking the bank. Service is brisk, and the staff is diligent about refilling water glasses, almost as if they're surreptitiously trying to sober you up. A few stray electronic disco balls and lights remind you this isn't just late-night sushi, this is Rock 'n' Roll Sushi. Party accordingly.

THE CURTAIN CALL

With Portland's Deputy Fire Chief Terry Walsh declaring that **Otto Pizza** at 576 Congress will “be closed for a while” following an oven fire in late summer, you're forced to take a detour into the Old Port via **Bill's Pizza** to satisfy your molten cheese cravings. Or you could walk a couple of blocks and take a seat at **Taco Escobarr**. Light, fizzy Mexican beers are delicious after a long night, and the colorful buzz of the dining room will imbue you with fresh energy. The kitchen stays open until 1 a.m. If you're really suffering from midnight munchies, select from the full menu and fill up on a plate of carne asada swaddled in cheese and tortilla with a side of delicious breaded avocado fries. Alternatively, on the late night menu, just five dollars will reward you with a plate of hot wings or “Ninos nachos”—a compact serving of chips, *queso chihuahua*, pickled jalapeños, onions, radish, *pico de gallo*, and *crema*. Night shifts aside, the ancient wisdom “*Nothing good ever happens after 2 a.m.*” has a flip side: All kinds of fun can happen before then. ■

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