

Dining out on Thanksgiving? Feasts abound!

Story by

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In every year of my life but two, I've spent Thanksgiving at the home of either my parents or aunt and uncle.

Of the outliers, one came while visiting a girlfriend who was away at college. She and I were welcomed into the home of her dorm roommate's Bahamian family.

The other was when I first moved to North Coast. Curious to see my new home, and with extended family with other commitments, my parents visited, and we ate out. Freed from cooking duties, we built our appetites with a righteously beautiful hike along the cliffs and coastlines of Ecola State Park.

The restaurant we dined at no longer exists, so any description is moot. Suffice it to say: The lack of leftovers aside, going out for Thanksgiving opens up a world of possibilities.

Regardless of circumstance, there are plenty of reasons to go out for Thanksgiving, not the least of which is that some restaurants offer extraordinary spreads, preparing some of their most involved, spectacular meals of the year.

Before we get to listing them, I would be remiss not to mention that the idea for this column came from a reader. Writing to the Mouth bears fruit! To that end, I'd love to hear about your Thanksgiving traditions, recipes and the like. (Another idea: Thanksgiving prep gone awry!) Share at mouth@coastweekend.com.

One last thing: Many of these Thanksgiving services require reservations and may be booked by the time you read this. In other words: Call ahead.



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CANNON BEACH

As perhaps the North Coast's epicenter of fine dining, no city hosts more upscale Thanksgiving specials than Cannon Beach.

Two of those — EVOO Cannon Beach Cooking School and Newmans at 988 — are already booked solid. (Is it too early to start thinking about reservations for next year? Maybe not, when EVOO's menu this Thanksgiving — their 13th — boasts a ridiculously enticing seven-course smorgasbord that includes scallops, black tobiko caviar, truffles, salmon, short ribs, duck, boar and NY strip.)

Don't dismay! At press time, there are still openings at some of Cannon Beach's top restaurants.

The Stephanie Inn (855-977-2444), a contender for, if not the undisputed champion of, sourcing the most exquisite ingredients on the entire coast (not to mention souring them regionally), offers a five-course, traditional turkey dinner that's \$119 per person.

Another Martin Hospitality venture in the upper echelon, The Wayfarer (503-436-1108), offers à la carte Thanksgiving choices, including Herb-Roasted Tom Turkey (from Astoria, \$47) and Beef Tournedos (\$57), as well as salads, pies and so on.

More affordable, casual options can be found at Pelican Brewing Company (503-908-3377) and Morris' Fireside Restaurant (503-436-2917). Both will have Thanksgiving-style specials alongside the full, regular menu. Pelican won't be taking reservations. Rather, it's first-come, first-served — which, in a last-second pinch, could come in handy.

ASTORIA

Astoria doesn't have as many Thanksgiving options as you might think. That blow is softened by the two restaurants staying open: Baked Alaska and Bridgewater Bistro, both institutions in their own right.

Baked Alaska (503-325-7414)

is doing a family-style dinner with turkey, mashed potatoes, yams, bacon Brussels sprouts, stuffing and cranberry, as well as starters and a shared pie and ice cream dessert. It's \$35 for adults, \$18 for kids.

At Bridgewater Bistro (503-325-6777), reservations are required for a special, à la carte menu. They'll have traditional roasted turkey as well as salmon, duck, vegetarian options and plenty more. All come with the familiar Thanksgiving sides — mashed potatoes, yams, veggies, cranberry chutney and the like. And, of course, they'll have pie.

SEASIDE/GEARHART

For \$60, Maggie's on the Prom (503-738-6403) offers a four-course menu replete with choices. For the entrée, for instance, choose between the classic turkey, New York steak, grilled king salmon or a butternut squash risotto. Reservations are required.

Both The Boardwalk Restaurant at Shilo Inn (503-738-8481) and Twisted Fish Steakhouse and Sports Lounge (503-738-3467) offer all-you-can-eat buffets. Before we even get to the desserts, the Boardwalk has 17 dishes, ranging from butternut squash salad to sweet potato gratin, brown sugar ham and, of course, turkey. It's \$25.95 for adults, \$19.95 for seniors. The Twisted Fish won't be taking reservations for their similarly priced buffet \$24.99 for adults, \$19.99 for seniors and \$12.99 for kids.

MANZANITA/NEHALEM/WHEELER

One of the only restaurants in the "three villages" open on the holiday is also one of the best. Wheeler's Rising Star Cafe (503-368-3990), where refined, classic techniques meet a humble, intimate setting, are doing a special menu with five choices — lamb shank, Black

Angus Rib-eye, salmon, duck and a risotto for vegetarians. As reservations are nearly requisite on the average day, they're certainly so on the holiday.

LONG BEACH/WASHINGTON PENINSULA

Besides excellent ingredients and culinary inspiration that's both local and worldly, the Shelburne Inn (360-642-4150) provides one of the most marvelous, compelling interiors in the region. Indeed, a holiday meal here ought to be memorable, elevated by the historic details and the warm, caring service. The \$59 prix fixe dinner includes a wild mushroom soup, Waldorf or Caesar salad, pecan or pumpkin pie, and choice of three entrées: turkey, New York strip with wild mushroom demi glaze, or salmon with huckleberry glaze.

The Depot (360-642-7880) is another excellent choice. At press time, their Thanksgiving menu was still taking shape. This much is clear: It includes a special, à la carte, traditional turkey dish, as well as select items from the regular menu. As one of the most beloved and awarded restaurants in the region, the Depot has earned the benefit of the doubt.

With ocean views atop the Adrift Hotel, Pickled Fish (360-642-2344) is doing a buffet for \$35 per person. Again, press time details on what will be served were opaque, but previous visits leave me confident that diners will find worthwhile value.

Finally, in Long Beach, there's 42nd Street Café & Bistro (360-642-2323), who are doing something a little different: entire Thanksgiving meal kits that are premade and oven-ready. For \$269 you'll get a 20-pound turkey, tomato soup, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, cranberry chutney, two pies and more. Of course, you'll need to place the order in advance. 