

# MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA

## THE BEST PATIOS

OUTSIDE EATING BEATS INDOOR SEATING WHEN WEATHER'S HEATING

Story by

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As the longest day of the year has come and gone. Summer solstice was June 21. Sunsets are now in retreat. But let the shortening of our glorious and all-too-brief summer days serve as a reminder: soak them up.

Do it with picnics and BBQs. Champagne, cheese and strawberries. Burgers, brats and beer. Do it with walks on the beach, by laying in the sun, by slowing down time. Squeeze them by blowing off work, taking a long lunch and turning off your phone.

And, of course, do it by eating — outside.

City by city, here are some of the best patios. If I've left any out — and I'm sure I have — let me know!

### CANNON BEACH

Surprisingly few restaurants on the entire North Coast have ocean views. Of those that do, even fewer have outdoor seating. I get it, to a point; the wind can be a beast. But on the right day, little compares to the luxury of being waited on beachside.

To that end, the Wayfarer Restaurant & Lounge's patio is the only game in town where the food competes with the view.

While the rest lack such proximity, there are plenty of restaurants in Cannon Beach where you can enjoy an afternoon in the sun.

The Bistro's bricked, green patio offers a measure of secluded peace and elevated happy-hour snacks. The Cannon Beach Hardware & Public House's outdoor seating, tucked around its south side, is shielded from the wind and the perfect place to share laughs, beers, wings and calamari.

While the Driftwood Restaurant



COLIN MURPHEY PHOTO

Patrons of The Bistro restaurant in Cannon Beach who bring their dogs with them have a menu of their own to choose from. Owner/chef Jack Stevenson decided to offer gourmet dog food as an option in the already canine-friendly community.

& Lounge's deck is hardly secluded — it is, rather, the epicenter of Cannon Beach's tourist bustle — the gas fire pit warms revelers late into the night.

On the Tolovana end of town, Surferest Market and Pizza has a grassy backyard with picnic tables that's great for kids. Plus, you can bring food and drinks from the market out there, too. Across the street there's the deck at the Warren House, where I recently found myself wishing I'd brought a hat to go along with the under-the-radar good chicken sandwich. Keep an eye out for that chubby seagull though ... he's not shy.

### SEASIDE

As I mentioned, restaurants with ocean views are bewilderingly rare in these parts. You can probably count them on one hand — at least if you don't count the views where you have to crane your neck. Among the few is Maggie's on the Prom, and from what I hear, chef Jason Lancaster has the place humming.

While it's not quite as close to the water, you can certainly still hear the surf at U Street Pub & Eatery. U Street gets points not only for

the neat details of their sandwiches and the spiciness of their clams, but for being nestled off Seaside's beaten path.

U Street (the street), which dead ends at the ocean, is a respite in a town with a tendency to feel clogged. But if you do happen to find yourself in the vicinity of Broadway Street's thrumming tourist magnet, Seaside Brewing Company is the spot for a burger and beer in the sun, especially if the upstairs deck is open. It's like poking your head above the clouds.

### ASTORIA

There's something both extraordinarily calming and otherworldly about the cargo freighters bobbing on the Columbia River. At rest, waiting to be loaded or cleaned, and even when they're in motion, they put me at ease and fill me with wonder.

There are plenty of restaurants along the piers from which to watch the lumbering giants, though most of the outdoor seating is precious, weather permitting — especially for things like exquisite dinner entrées, the likes of which you'll find plenty of at Bridgewater Bistro.

For a more blue collar experience — or, simply a beer and a big floppy slice of NY-style pizza — the Inferno Lounge deck at happy hour is hard to beat. And by virtue of facing east and being shielded from the ocean wind, it can be more reliably comfy.

Of heavy gusts can be made the patio at La Cabaña de Raya a non-starter, but get lucky and Young's Bay will feel like your own. To whatever you're having, add the spicy, fruity, blended Man-goneada cocktail as desert.

Though it isn't on the water, you can certainly spy the Columbia from atop Fort George Brewery's new-ish second story patio (built this spring). I'm particularly fond



ERICK BENDEL PHOTO

Diners enjoy Bridgewater Bistro's deck overlooking the Columbia River in Astoria.

of the Wednesday burger special upstairs, and just about everything else that comes out of that 700-degree wood-burning oven.

And while plunked ground-level in the center of downtown, the Astoria Station pod at the corner Duane and 13th streets boasts an enticing variety of craft. Clustered around the brick and mortars of Reach Break Brewing and Reveille Ciderworks are three carts: the luscious, moan-inducing sandwiches of Hot Box BBQ; the spicy noodles and supple wings of Mai Tong Thai; and the tradition-mashing newcomers, Hong Kong Taco Cart. Altogether it's a veritable quandary — one of the more exciting developments in North Coast dining.

### ILWACO

Salt Pub is pressed up against the Port of Ilwaco, the bridge between land and dozens of small commercial fishing boats. By the time you read this, a number of those boats should be beginning their summer tuna season. The few tables out back of Salt, along the port's promenade, are a perfect place to ponder that mysterious world of seafaring life.

While you're doing so, the fish and chips — or anything with tuna — would be a splendid choice. Indeed, you might catch a glimpse of the very boat that caught your dinner.

### WHEELER

Wheeler's Salmonberry Saloon,

too, is perched above boats. But compared to Ilwaco's port, the Nehalem Bay is pretty quaint, more day trippers and hobbyists than commercial vessels.

Nonetheless, over calm waters the Salmonberry's deck is one of the most serene on the whole North Coast. And by making a point to feature the products of the Nehalem River Valley's many marvelous farms, the Salmonberry's fare will have you floating, too.

### LONG BEACH

As far as I can tell, Long Beach is a little short on great patios. But, rest assured, one of their best restaurants has your back.

The Depot Restaurant has a cute, intimate, covered deck, complete with heaters and ivy-covered trellises. Just like inside, the Depot balances the best of both worlds: an impeccable fine-dining experience that retains casual charm.

The Shelburne Inn Pub has a garden area that matches the historic hotel's interior — wonderfully artistic, with flora as colorful and ornate as the antique stained glass inside.

Speaking of plants, the many farmer's markets scattered throughout the region are wonderful places to eat outside. They boast terrific food carts and fantastic purveyors that can't be found anywhere else.

And the markets, like the long summer days, won't last forever. So get out there and seize the daylight. **CW**