

Let's eat out

Catch Seattle's sun with the best alfresco meals around

BY MOLLY WATSON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMANDA KOSTER

The **salad days** of summer are the payoff for living through months of rain. We love to take advantage of Seattle's steady sunshine and the daylight that lasts well into night by eating outside whenever we can. Because outdoor dining is so hard to come by in Seattle, we don't limit our search to any one particular kind; instead, we look for the best of it all, from fries served in paper-lined baskets at a plastic table to seared scallops and a glass of Pinot Gris in white-tableclothed elegance. What all of these places have in common is that elusive combination: a great outdoor setting and tasty food.



Grab a harbor-side table and a bucket of clams at Maggie Bluff's Marina Grill.



Best view

Kick back with the richest clam chowder in the West (with a swirl of basil oil on top) and take in the sweeping nothing-but-water-between-you-and-the-Olympic-Mountains view at **Ray's Cafe**. There are plenty of simple seafood preparations for those who can resist the clam-laden chowder, and the signature Smokin' Joey mocktail (lime, ginger ale, sugar, and bitters) cools off the summer's heat. \$\$; lunch and dinner daily. 6049 Seaview Ave. N.W.; www.rays.com or 206/782-0094.

Most romantic

A cozy and eclectic atmosphere is just a flight of stairs down from the Post Alley entrance marked only by the eponymous **Pink Door**. The patio beckons diners with views of Elliott Bay and oodles of charm. A pasta dish, a bottle of vino, and an adoring sweetheart should complete the picture at this bit of Italy in Pike Place Market. \$\$; lunch Mon-Sat, dinner daily. 1919 Post Alley; www.thepinkdoor.net or 206/443-3241.



Clockwise from top: corn-crab chowder and a prime table at Ray's Cafe; the actual pink door; the Pink Door's patio.



Best oysters

Don't miss the staggering variety of oysters served with clever frozen champagne mignonette at **Elliott's Oyster House**. The patio is perfect for soaking in the sights of Elliott Bay. Progressive happy hour starts at 3 p.m. Monday-Friday with chef's choice oysters for 50 cents each. The price increases 20 cents every half-hour, but you'll be too content to notice. \$\$\$\$; lunch and dinner daily. 1201 Alaskan Way; www.elliottsoysterhouse.com or 206/623-4340.



Best fish 'n' chips with kids

This is Seattle, after all, and not just any fish will do. At **Little Chinook's** you can choose between salmon, cod, and halibut (prawns and clam strips are also available) to accompany the crispy seasoned fries and poppy seed-studded coleslaw. The patio furniture overlooking Fishermen's Terminal leaves something to be desired, but kids love watching the boats. \$; lunch



and dinner daily. Fishermen's Terminal, 1900 W. Nickerson St.; www.anthonys.com or 206/283-4665.

Trendiest

Salads and seafood stand out on the ever-changing menu at the pretty **35th Street Bistro**. Cool down with a cucumber martini while absorbing the Fremont scene. \$\$\$; lunch and dinner Tue-Sun, brunch Sat-Sun. 709 N. 35th St.; www.35bistro.com or 206/547-9850.

Best boatside burger

Nestled among the boats at Elliott Bay Marina, **Maggie Bluff's Marina Grill** has perspective-enhancing water-level views of downtown. Arm yourself with a burger and a beer and while away a summer's day, or take advantage of \$3.99 buckets o' clams and crab bites during happy hour (3 p.m.-6 p.m. daily). \$; lunch and dinner daily, breakfast Sat-Sun. 2601 W. Marina Place; 206/283-8322.

Best brunch

Baked eggs and homemade scones and coffee cake are served on the charming brick patio of **Madison Park Café**. Well-behaved dogs and cats are welcome. \$\$\$; dinner Tue-Sat, brunch Sat-Sun. 1807 42nd Ave. E.; www.madisonparkcafe.citysearch.com or 206/324-2626.

Best sidewalk dining

Considering that so many months of the year in Seattle demand indoor dining, a surprising number of restaurants here bother to store a few tables to pull out to the sidewalk once summer arrives. Tom Douglas's take on a Greek diner, **Lola** (\$\$\$\$; breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily; 2000B Fourth Ave.; www.tomdouglas.com or 206/441-1430) serves up season-perfect grilled food and a Greek martini (made with feta-stuffed olives). At **Le Pichet** (\$\$; breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily; 1933 First Ave.; www.lepichetseattle.com or 206/256-1499) you can experience a bit of Paris while grabbing a meal or simply an espresso and watching the town walk by. ✱



Clockwise from top: sidewalk tables and chocolate cake at 35th Street Bistro; casual eats and a relaxed crowd at Maggie Bluff's Marina Grill.

