



This is
NOVA SCOTIA
Canada's Seacoast

Nova Scotia Cooking – The way to a Traveller's Heart.

If you're from away you're going to love our food. But there's a price to pay to enjoy it. You're going to have to tell us so – over and over again. For a province-full of good, some even great cooks, we're modest about our local fare. We just "cook plain". It's the way we were brought up – with fish in one form or another every Friday, baked beans and brown bread on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings, fish chowder for supper (yes, supper, not dinner), fishcakes once a week, always with homemade chow chow, spareribs and sauerkraut, boiled dinners of corned beef and cabbage followed by leftover hash, and let's not forget the rabbit stew, which you might have trouble finding today. But, this is all plain cooking.

Go to a restaurant worth its salt and you'll find chefs and cooks, often from away, who appreciate what Nova Scotians consider to be nothing out of the ordinary. Loved, yes, but what's so different about it? Sometimes it takes an objective approach to fully appreciate and lovingly prepare the ingredients that meld into a meal worth eating. At home, the cooking is routine. The love goes into the eating.

As visitors, you may not find yourselves at a kitchen table in Yarmouth, Guysborough, or Hants County. And if you do, the person doing the cooking might fancy it up by using a recipe from a trendy magazine in an effort to please you. But you can buy the same magazine, and probably have. What you crave is that special flavour that comes with Nova Scotia cooking. You've heard about the wonderful early summer meal of new vegetables cooked in cream (or milk) called Hodge Podge. You want to judge for yourself how plain ole', well, new vegetables can become something ethereal. And it is.

Nowhere on earth is the strawberry season more fully enjoyed than here in Nova Scotia, especially when the sweet berry is married with our tart rhubarb. If it's on the menu, order a piece of strawberryrhubarb

pie. It's one of our favourites. And in August, when the blueberries are being picked, you'll want to sample that dish called Blueberry Grunt. Forget that it's only blueberries simmered with sugar and spices and topped with dumplings. Dumplings! Together they're great. Look for it. And ask for it.

The food that comes out of Nova Scotia kitchens is largely influenced by French, British (especially Scottish), Loyalist, and German backgrounds. As early as 1633, when they came to stay, plant their apple trees, and, urged on by frugality, invent "receipts" from indigenous ingredients, the Acadians have established well their culinary heritage. Some say the love of rappie pie is acquired only after a few helpings. Others take to it immediately, especially when it's served with molasses, which is never far from the kitchen table. If that doesn't suit your taste, you can be sure a chicken fricot or clam pie will do the trick. And for dessert, you can't do better than buttermilk pie, an ingenious use of the by-product of butter-making. To leave Nova Scotia without having tried some form of Acadian fare, is never really having been here.

Perhaps nowhere is the English culinary tradition more prominently reflected than in the pubs and taverns across Nova Scotia. This is where you'll find the shepherds' pies, plowman's lunches, sausage rolls, and, most popular of all, fish and chips.

Fish and chips were to industrial England what the hot dog was to the United States – the original fast food of generations who knew of McDonald's only as a Scottish clan. And here in Nova Scotia there are many corner operations and small restaurants that proudly aim to please the fish and chip crowd. Upscale restaurants might call their dish haddock and frites, but we know it's fish and chips. And we order them at places we have come to rely on. Food critics have tried to locate the best of the batch, but it all comes down to a matter of preference.



For more information, go to
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Do you like your fish fried in a light or heavy batter? Or just run through a coating of seasoned flour? And will that be cod or haddock? Some ask only one question before they order. “Is the fish fresh or frozen?” If the answer is evasive, like “Well, it’s fresh-frozen,” true fish and chip addicts may opt for the special of the day.

Lunenburg County is the stronghold of German fare. If you’re lucky, you might start with an appetizer of Solomon Gundy (pickled herring) and go on to a salad of sauerkraut or cucumbers in sour cream. Follow this with an entrée of salt cod and pork scraps, which the Germans call House Bankin and others call Dutch Mess, and for dessert, gingerbread with lemon sauce, or pie of any kind. It’s here that the great cabbages grow and are turned into sauerkraut and kohl slaw. It’s here where potatoes are made into a delicious Kartofflesuppe or added to the batter of raised doughnuts called Fasnaks. It’s here that a sausage called Lunenburg pudding is adored, and it’s here where some of the best home cooks ply their mixing spoons and rolling pins. Oh yes, in Lunenburg County, they take pride in their baking but modestly ask “what’s all the fuss?”

You’ll find Scottish cuisine prominently located in Pictou County and Cape Breton, or wherever oatcakes appear in bread baskets (give a restaurant a star for this). From Scotch broth or cock-a-leekie soup served with bannock or porridge bread, to smoked kippers, finnan haddie or poached salmon with a side of clapshot, or tatties and ‘neeps, you’ll find something special about Scottish fare. This is especially true if you wash it down with a tot of rare single malt whisky distilled at Cape Breton’s Glenora Distillery, the only place in North America that makes it.

With the early back-and-forth flow of people between Nova Scotia and New England, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the cuisine of either. We readily credit the New Englanders who brought to their Nova Scotia homes the cornmeal that we turn into puddings and Johnny cakes, the baked beans and brown bread, and the traditional Thanksgiving dinner of turkey, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie. But we hold close to our hearts the first fish chowders ever served in North America. To stake our claim we point to the blackened pots of the early 1500s, when foreign fishermen came to fill their nets and ships with the prolific cod. They had to eat. And fish was handy.

The perfect fish, seafood or clam chowder is here. Somewhere. But finding it depends on your personal preference. Some connoisseurs like a thick chowder, others like it thin. Perhaps somewhere in between lies perfection. You may find it, if you stay long enough.

Visit www.novascotia.com for more information.

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