

May 22, 2013

## Delicious Delaware is tasty beach retreat

**What's new, improved for those who visit the shore to eat**

By Stephanie Citron, Special to The Baltimore Sun

Many summer resorts boast spectacular beaches and a vast array of fabulous accommodations. So what distinguishes one beach town from another? Along coastal Delaware, it's the indigenous flavors that set it apart from its sand-strewn neighbors to the north and south.

This season, go beyond those cookie-cutter chain restaurants and pizza dives — and indulge in the most savory sips and bites at the beach. Along with some revamped favorites, we've uncovered delectable new destinations for haute cuisine, homegrown produce and seafood, locally brewed and distilled libations, markets and food tours.

### Restaurants



distillery upstairs, where folks can watch hops turn into gin through a glass window.

**Dogfish Head Brewery**, 6 Cannery Village Center, Milton, 302-684-1000, [dogfish.com](http://dogfish.com). Delaware's most-famous brewmaker, has undergone a \$52 million expansion at its brewery in Milton. Tours now run every 30 minutes with added attractions: a new 200,000-barrel Brewhouse, state-of-the-art bottling system, kegging line and a magnificent, enlarged tasting room. There's also a new gift shop stocked with signature gear. The Dogfish Brewpub in downtown Rehoboth Beach (320 Rehoboth Avenue, 302-226-2739) has an onsite



**Delaware Distilling Company**, 18693 Highway One, Rehoboth Beach, 302-645-8273 [delawaredistillingcompany.com](http://delawaredistillingcompany.com). The cocktail crowd now has their own high-spirited taproom. Delaware Distilling Company is pouring its own handcrafted spirits — potato vodka, gin and white gin. Newer concoctions — sweet potato vodka, aged whiskey and varietals — will be rolling out throughout the summer. Also on-site is a Fusion Bar blending fresh flavor-infusers including local fruit and quirky additives like horseradish for Bloody Marys.

Many dishes on the dining menu are cooked with signature spirits or "mashes." Don't miss the rum-mashed-candied-bacon and potato-vodka-mash potato pancakes. The gift shop sells Age-Your-Own-Whiskey-Kits, beginning at about \$100. Free tours of the distillery are expected to begin in July.

**Papa Grande's**, 38929 Madison Avenue, Fenwick, 302-436-7272, [papagrandes.com](http://papagrandes.com). Leave it to SoDel restaurant-guru Matt Haley to bring coastal Central American cuisine to the Delaware shore: Papa

Grande's is a Coastal Taqueria on Fenwick Island. In a restored waterfront barn, lovers of Latin cuisine can sample some of the most innovative fare this side of the Rio Grande. The restaurant offers 18 intriguing varieties of tacos, including wood-roasted goat and lamb-shank mole, made-to-order guacamole and salsas, and Mexican ceviche cocktails. If you're bent on living La Vida Loca, taste the authentic tequilas and Ole Mole, Papa Grande's signature beer. There's even a sugarcane crusher for fresh margaritas and sangria. Try to nab a table on the wrap-around porch for unobstructed ocean views spanning from Ocean City to Bethany.



**Ropewalk Tavern**, 700 Coastal Highway, 302-581-0153, ropewalktavern.com. Federal Hill invades Fenwick Island as Ropewalk Tavern, Baltimore's award-winning burger-and-wings restaurant, plans to open in June, offering an expanded menu including 10 varieties of oysters. Ropewalk's front facade features glass walls that open completely, inviting sea breezes and sunshine. Out back is a sand-beach playground with palm trees.

**Root Gourmet**, 19724 Coastal Highway, 302-727-5664, rootgourmet.com. An off-shoot of famed Rehoboth restaurant Nage is the new Root Gourmet, a take-out/ delivery/cafe offering full meals, sides, soups, salads and desserts. Plus all of the bread is homemade. Try the charred flank steak with chimichurri sauce.

### **Culinary pizzazz**

**Spice & Tea Exchange**, 10 Rehoboth Ave., Rehoboth Beach, 302-227-3327, spiceandtea.com or facebook.com/SpiceAndTeaRehoboth. Where can you score the hottest rubs in Rehoboth? Chefs at the new Spice & Tea Exchange custom-blend spices, flavor-infuse salts and sugars to create the perfect seasoning for whatever you're planning to cook up. There are oodles of individual and pre-packaged

spices, loose-leaf teas and funky accouterments like grinders and infusers. On the do-not-miss-list is salted-caramel-sugar popcorn seasoning and Bloody Mary mix -- delicious on chicken.

**Mamma Mia!**, 19724 Coastal Highway, Rehoboth Beach, 302-227-1500, [touchofitaly.com](http://touchofitaly.com). Foodies addicted to NYC's famous Eataly will be thrilled to discover a "Mini-Me" version in Rehoboth Beach. In mid-June, Lewes' Touch of Italy is opening its 5,000 square-foot culinary wonderland, featuring a full-menu, 100-seat, Tuscan countryside-inspired restaurant surrounded by an authentic pasticceria (pastry shop), and salumeria (butcher/deli).

**Bramble & Brine**, 315 Rehoboth Ave., Rehoboth Beach, 302-227-7702, [brambleandbrine.com](http://brambleandbrine.com). Bramble & Brine is a new global-fare, fine dining restaurant is housed in an antique shop. Love the décor? Take it with you — it's all-available for purchase. For intimate groups, there is an eight-seat, six-course fixed price dinner in a private dining room. Opening in July.

### Tasty tours and temptations

**Eating Rehoboth.** When traveling, ever wish a local foodie could guide you through their favorite haunts? Happily, a new outfit called Eating Rehoboth, provides three-hour culinary adventures through five of Rehoboth's top restaurants to meet chefs, nibble samples and sip libations. Along the way are stops at specialty food shops and little-known outdoor dining spots. Customers receive signature gift totes and coupons to the venues. Tours are \$45 per person and are offered Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Reservations required. Go to [eatingrehoboth.com](http://eatingrehoboth.com).



**Wine and rock.** Entertaining at the beach? Jazz up your soirée with rock-star entertainment. Musician-turned-winemaker Paul Cullen (302-228-9775, [paulcullen.net](http://paulcullen.net)), former bass player for famed rock band Bad Company, will come to your event, pour wine and play music for you and your guests. Rates are \$20 per person for 20 people or more.

**Beach Eats!**, 511 Rehoboth Ave., 302-227-7310, [rehobothbeachmuseum.org](http://rehobothbeachmuseum.org). Blast back to beach-dining's past at the new Beach Eats! exhibit at the Rehoboth Beach Museum. You'll surely recognize your favorite nostalgic seaside munchies from those cherished salt-water-taffy-times. Opens May 25.

**Rehoboth Restaurant Week.** The event, June 2-8, offers three-course, fixed price meals ranging from \$25 to \$35 at participating restaurants. Go to [downtownrehoboth.com/downtown-happenings/restaurant-week.htm](http://downtownrehoboth.com/downtown-happenings/restaurant-week.htm)

**Rehoboth in My Pocket app.** Tired of fighting the dinner crowds? RehobothFoodie.com, Southern Delaware's five-starred, go-to site for reviews on everything delicious, has launched the app Rehoboth in My Pocket offering online reservations and candid reviews. \$3.99 on iPhone and Android.

## **Farm fresh**

Southern Delaware feels like one big farm stand. Within the beach towns and surrounding rural communities, there's a farmer's market nearly every day of the week. Each offers different foodstuff, depending upon what's fresh that day. Here are the farmers markets along the shore:

**Bethany Beach:** Sundays, 8 a.m. to noon, June 16 – Sept. 1 at Garfield Parkway and Pennsylvania Avenue. Go to [bethanybeachfarmersmarket.com](http://bethanybeachfarmersmarket.com)

**Fenwick Island:** Mondays and Fridays, 8 a.m. to noon, June 25-Aug. 31 at Coastal Highway and Essex Street. Go to [fenwickislandfarmersmarket.com](http://fenwickislandfarmersmarket.com)

**Historic Lewes:** Saturdays, 8 a.m. to noon, through Sept. 28, at 110 Ship Carpenter St., except June 22, July 13 and Aug. 3, when the market will be held at 910 Shields Ave. Go to [historiclewesfarmersmarket.org](http://historiclewesfarmersmarket.org)

**Rehoboth Beach:** Tuesdays, Noon to 4 p.m., through Sept. 24, Grove Park. Go to [rbfarmersmarket.com](http://rbfarmersmarket.com)

**Agritourism Trail.** Pick up just-picked and freshly-purveyed foodstuff on your way into town by visiting the growers and producers on Delaware's new Agritourism Trail. For a listing, go to [visitdefarms.org](http://visitdefarms.org).

## **Information**

For more on restaurants along the shore, go to [visitsoutherndelaware.com](http://visitsoutherndelaware.com). For a listing of restaurants whose menus incorporate local ingredients, go to [localonthemenu.com](http://localonthemenu.com).