

PRESS RELEASE

Maine Tasting Center
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HAVING FUN WITH FOOD AT MAINE TASTING CENTER

Maine Tasting Center, located at 506 Old Bath Rd, Wiscasset, ME, 04578, is bringing new, experiential dining options to the Midcoast region over the coming months. The education center will be offering a selection of one-day-only pop-up dinners, brunches and chef's tastings developed in partnership with local cooking instructors, chefs and food writers. With topics ranging from Chinese hot pot to Dungeons and Dragons (yes, you read that right!), each meal is intended to showcase ingredients from Maine food and drink producers in unique and creative ways.

Maine Tasting Center opened to the public in 2021 and, in 2022, launched a nonprofit (Maine Food and Beverage Education Center) responsible for developing, managing, and executing educational programming at the site. "Our goal [at MFBEC] is to build bridges between our state's producers and the public, and to explore new and novel ways of doing that," says Ana-Maria Bell, Director of Development at Maine Food and Beverage Education Center. "Food education is important - and it can also be such great fun!"

Brewmaster and personal chef Michael LaCharite will head up both the first and last pop-up experiences of the season – a Ployes-themed brunch on July 29 and a traditional "Maine Bean Suppah" on October 8, respectively. Ployes, a historic but often overlooked Maine dish, are French-Acadian buckwheat pancakes that can be made from a locally-produced mix or from scratch, and can be served with a nearly endless variety of both sweet and savory toppings. LaCharite will include several different preparations in his demonstration and in the meal enjoyed by attendees.

On August 5, Maine Tasting Center will debut its most unusual and interactive dinner event, Dungeons and Drafts. This evening event will teach about iconic Maine foods within the setting of a Dungeons & Dragons campaign. Equally suited to both veteran adventurers and brand-new players, the event will include a 3-hour long campaign that incorporates details about Maine foods, dinner and drinks from the Maine Tasting Center "Tavern" and even a complimentary set of dice for each player.

Later in August, cooking instructor and cookbook author Jeff Mao will offer a Lobster Hot Pot pop-up dinner, introducing visitors to the history and technique behind traditional Chinese hot pot. Attendees will cook their meal in a flavorful broth simmering at their table, enjoying add-ins like Maine lobster, meats, mushrooms, locally-made dumplings and tofu, and farm-fresh vegetables. An assortment of delicious dipping sauces and plenty of Maine craft beer, the beverage pairing of choice for Chinese hot pot, will also be served.

Rounding out the season will be a cooking demonstration and multi-course tasting with *edible* MAINE editor Christine Burns Rudalevige on September 9. This exclusive happy hour event will feature the delicious flavors of the Maine coast – including oysters, lobster, finfish and seaweed. During the event, Rudalevige will show attendees how to make four mouthwatering dishes with locally-harvested Maine ingredients, while speaking about the past, present and future of coastal Maine’s food industries.

Each pop-up dining experience will only be offered once during the 2022 season. “These are one-of-a-kind opportunities in the Midcoast area,” says Sara Gross, General Manager at Maine Tasting Center. “We are so excited to combine local food education with fun and different event formats - we know our guests will have as much fun attending as we had putting these experiences together!”

Maine Food and Beverage Education Center is proud to offer this lineup of educational dining experiences at the Maine Tasting Center campus in Wiscasset. Tickets for pop-up dinners and other educational experiences are available at www.mainetastingcenter.com/classes or www.mfbec.org/classes.

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