

The 21 new Jersey Shore restaurants you must try for summer 2023

Published: May. 23, 2023, 7:00 a.m.



Spread at Burger 25 in Ship BottomBurger 25

By [Stephanie Rizzolo](#) | For NJ Advance Media

Locals and tourists alike know the deal: The Jersey Shore is home to some of the finest food in the state.

As Memorial Day weekend approaches, seasonal spots awaken from hibernation, while the year-round warriors prepare for the onslaught of summer shore-goers. The tried and true will continue to evoke nostalgia-induced joy and satisfaction, while the newcomers add potential freshness to the existing seaside dining scene.

Will they earn a permanent place in New Jersey's shore dining rotation? Here are 21 new restaurants to check out this summer season!



Seafood paella and pork "Alentejana" at Lita in Aberdeen(Stephanie Rizzolo | for NJ Advance Media)

Lita, Aberdeen

Hey, the Bayshore counts, too! First came Heirloom Kitchen in Old Bridge, then came [Heirloom at The St. Laurent](#) in Asbury Park. This season, chef David Viana and Neilly Robinson [bring us Lita](#), a “modern Iberian restaurant,” and ode to Viana’s Portuguese heritage and his mother’s namesake. The warm tones of the dining room set an inviting aesthetic, and the dishes follow suit. Small plates like the salt cod croquettes and garlic shrimp are flavor bombs, but don’t skip the perfectly executed seafood paella, packed with giant prawns, tender daybook scallops and addictively crispy rice. Finish with a warm pastel de nata or hearth-fired Basque cheesecake, and you’ll already be plotting your next visit back.

Good Dog Bar, Atlantic City

After almost two decades of success in Philadelphia, [Good Dog Bar](#), is expanding to Atlantic City in May, a stones throw from the infamous Knife & Fork restaurant and Stockton University's AC campus. A former swingers' club, the bi-level space has been completely revamped and features a large outdoor area where guests can enjoy the same core menu as the Philly location plus some different, seafood-focused specials.

Nobu, Atlantic City

[Nobu](#) isn't new to the world but it is to New Jersey. Housed in Caesars Hotel & Casino, chef Nobu's classic yellowtail jalapeño, spicy tuna crispy rice and miso cod can all be enjoyed with expansive views of the ocean. Things get turned up on Saturday nights with DJ sets from 8 p.m. until midnight.

The Break, Asbury Park

Formerly Langosta Lounge, the BarCo Brands team has increased their shore footprint with [The Break](#), located at 1000 Ocean Ave. Guests can enjoy casual, coastal vibes and ocean views while noshing on a varied menu of raw bar, tacos, handhelds and a more substantial mains. Head over for live music on Fridays and Saturdays at 9 p.m. or during their Sunday Boardwalk Brunch at 1 p.m.

The Promenade, Avon-by-the-Sea

[The Promenade](#) breathes new life into the building that was formerly Avon Pavilion at 600 Ocean Ave. Recently celebrating their soft opening, this seasonal, BYOB restaurant will eventually serve breakfast, brunch, lunch and dinner daily, as well as grab-and-go salads, ice cream, burgers and sandwiches from their concession window. The menu is vast, ranging from seafood-heavy starters to sushi to familiar and more creative Italian mains, fish dishes and chops.

QC Market, Beach Haven

[QC Market](#), a new multi-offering food outlet, recently opened at the Queen City Marina in Beach Haven, just in time for the season. Part food market, part quick service cafe, they're serving all-day menus including lemon ricotta pancakes, smash burgers and tuna poke bowls. Keep an eye out for their ticketed events, like the seafood boil they're hosting over Memorial Day weekend.

F Street Social Craft Kitchen & Pizza, Belmar

Belmar adds another BYOB to its belt with the recent opening of [F Street Social](#). Inspired by Belmar's historic downtown business district whose Main Street was originally called F Street, the restaurant boasts a vast menu of American and Italian favorites plus a very extensive pizza menu, baked in a wood burning oven. Separate kids and family-style menus make F Street a great option for those rolling deep, and their party room can be reserved for private functions. Dine al fresco with your favorite bottle for optimal summer vibes.



Oyster Stew at The Cricket Club in Cape May
Kyle Kulkowitz

The Cricket Club, Cape May

[The Cricket Club](#) opened in October of 2022 in the completely renovated, former site of the Merion Inn. Community veterans the Kulkowitz family maintained some original, historic touches (like the beautiful stained glass windows), but have given nearly everything else a fresh start. The globally inspired menu includes everything from lamb ribs to tacos to “poor mi” sandwiches, complimented by a full-service bar. For the full experience, stop in on the weekends when they offer live music.

Robbie’s Chicken Shack, Manahawkin

When one chicken spot closes, another one opens, and such was the case for [Robbie’s Chicken Shack](#) in Manahawkin. Taking the place of Cluck’n Crabs in Mill Creek Plaza, this new takeout joint is keeping it simple with a menu of chicken wings, soups, salads, “shackwiches” and baskets. AGrab an order of their fried oreos or funnel cake fries to satisfy a shore sweet craving without a visit to the boardwalk.

Buoy’s, Manasquan

Sandwiches are the ultimate beach eats, and there’s a new kid on the block in Manasquan making some serious ones. Posted up on East Main Street in The Cove’s former digs, [Buoy’s](#) is building impressive handhelds like the rooster, a breakfast belly buster stacked with fried chicken, burnt honey butter and bacon jam on brioche and a mean looking smash burger for lunch.

Off Center Food Supply, Manasquan

The next chapter of the family-owned Manasquan staple, Center Food Market, opened in a brand new building just down the street from their family’s former institution. Classic and build your own deli sandwiches anchor the menu, along with house-made soups, salades, quiche and mac n’ cheese. Check their social pages for specials like their meatloaf sandwich and other surprises.

The Committed Pig, Manasquan

Any restaurant with an entire menu section dedicated to “pork roll sandwiches” is a worthy mention, especially after a three-year-long wait. The Manasquan location of [The Committed Pig](#) finally reopened as a 185-seat restaurant the space that previously housed Maria’s Italian Cuisine. After extensive renovations, a new second-story bar and rooftop patio and custom window and door installations that will offer semi-al fresco dining, owners Jerry Rotunno and Tony Monteiro are eager to reintroduce their all-day brunch menu and other favorites to the local community.



Lobster Roll at Freddy J's Bar & Kitchen in May's LandingGrant Kneble

Freddy J's Bar & Kitchen, May's Landing

Named after owner Grant Kneble's father, [Freddy J's Bar & Kitchen](#) are crafting creative cocktails and cuisine in Mays Landing. Having already established a following for their Smoked Misunderstood Old Fashioned, this family-owned and operated restaurant's goal is to bring the local community together, much like Grant's father did through his auto repair shop, [Kneble's Auto Service Center](#). Expect elevated comfort food and twists on classic gastropub dishes like short rib Mac and cheese, house-made cheese curds and weekend-only barbecue menu.

Baseline Social, Oceanport

The sequel to Deal Lake Bar + Co, in Loch Arbour, Baseline Social is the latest venture from the team behind BarCo Brands. Located within Fort Monmouth's former commissary building, the restaurant, bar and lounge completed the recent renovation of The Commissary at Baseline. Their restaurant, bar and entertainment venue, which will include a live music lounge, virtual golf, sports viewing area and outdoor fire pit's, is part of The Commissary at Baseline alongside other food and drink concepts. Ownership is shooting for a late spring or summer opening.

CapoStrada, Ocean City

Assuming the quaint corner where Katrina's previously sat, [CapoStrada](#) brings Italian street food to Ocean City. In addition to a variety of traditional pasta dishes, they're focusing on beach-friendly handhelds like piadine, charcuterie cups, panzerotti. For those with heartier appetites, try the "La Familia Muffaletta," a mammoth sandwich meant for two to four people stuffed with prosciutto, hot soppressetta, cappicola, hard salami, imported sharp provolone and house made olive tapenade, piled onto Capo's freshly baked bread.

Boatyard401, Point Pleasant Beach

The latest project by the Fahey Restaurant Group who have [Reef & Barrel](#) in Manasquan, [Cross & Orange](#) in Asbury Park, and [Joe's Surf Shack](#) in Lake Como finally opened [Boatyard401](#) in Point Pleasant Beach last fall after a series of unexpected delays. Embracing the town's fisherman culture, the restaurant's casual nautical theme boast 245 seats and a menu featuring seafood, tacos, pizza, burgers and more. Family-friendly during dinner service, Boatyard turns things up with a DJ after 9 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and an earlier live music set on Wednesdays.



Pizza slice at Sally Boy's in Red Bank Sally Boy's

Sally Boy's Pizza, Red Bank

Co-founder of the famous Artichoke Pizza as well as numerous Italian specialty restaurants, chef Sal Basile added a new brand to his belt with [Sally Boy's Pizza](#) in Red Bank. Start with Basile's signature Sally Boy's Slice — a whole, foldable, round pizza, fired in their Italian-made, Ferrari-red Castelli oven, followed by a "monster" calzone, pizza roll or one of the many classic pizzeria entrees. Basile is planning to expand the brand as well offer shipping anywhere within the U.S. via their much anticipated Sally Boy's Marketplace.



Bacon Royale Burger at Burger 25 in Ship BottomCMG

Burger 25, Ship Bottom

Sliding into the former Surf Taco digs on LBI Boulevard later this spring, family-owned [Burger 25](#) will be opening their second location, serving the same stacked burgers, salads, milkshakes, and more that made their Toms River operation a success.

Dolce Liberata, Stafford

There's no shortage of BYOB Italian restaurants along Jersey's coast, which gained one more with the winter opening of [Dolce Liberata](#) in the old Denino's Pizzeria & Restaurant space. The 140-seat restaurant offers free delivery to the entire stretch of Long Beach Island, Manahawkin West Creek and Waretown and caters to gluten free and other special diets. Menu favorites include their chicken parm vodka, shrimp risotto and their meat lasagna.

Big Dogs Cafe, Toms River

Piled-high burgers, milkshakes and breakfast are the name of the game at recently opened [Big Dogs Cafe](#). Located in the former Chomp! space on Route 37, the restaurant will offer sit down and take out service with a focus on "perfectly crafted plates" made of fresh ingredients. Their menu isn't for the timid eater, with dishes like tres leches pancakes, birria burgers and rainbow cookie milkshakes.



Sauteed veal at Stephen's Restaurant in WildwoodStephen Quici

Stephen's Restaurant, Wildwood

When Nan and Pop's Kitchen announced their closing last fall, Wildwood residents and seasonal visitors were left with a question mark. Lucky for them, local restaurateur and chef veteran, Stephen Quici rolled in with his namesake, [Stephen's Restaurant](#). Quici's Villa Nova Cafe in the Crest is a breakfast-only spot, which gave him the opportunity to embark on this new dinner (and breakfast) venture, with the help of his wife. The menu is Italian inspired and seafood-heavy, including a surf and turf special as a nod to another one of the spaces' former lives, the Lobster Shack. BYOB or try something from their local wine partner, Terra Nonna winery.

Stephanie Rizzolo may be reached at stephanienjdotcom@gmail.com. Find [NJ.com](#) on Facebook.