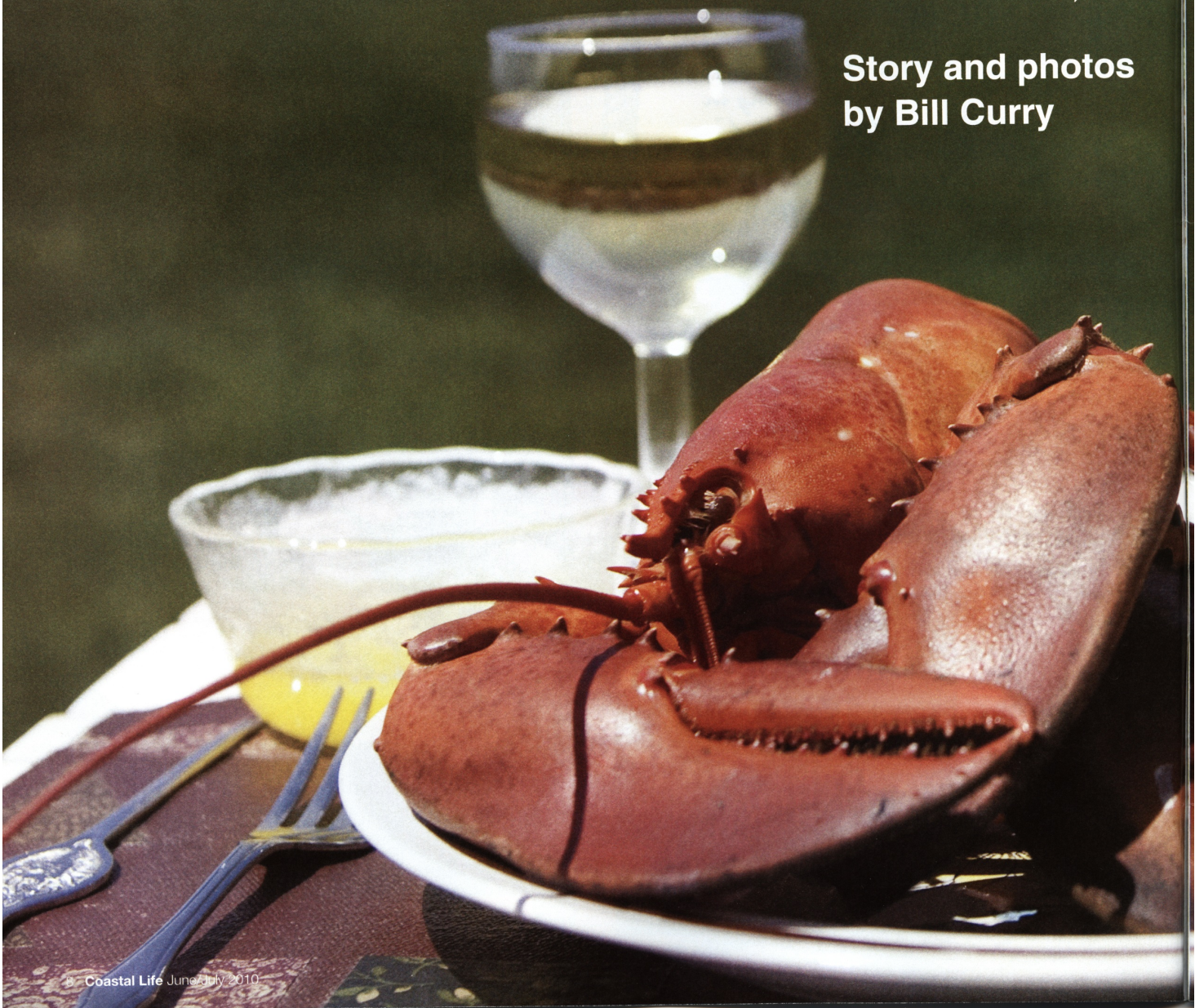



feature

Lobster - how do I eat thee? Let me count the ways.

Story and photos
by Bill Curry



A photograph of a cooked lobster on a white plate, with a bottle of wine or oil in the background and silverware on the table.

With apologies to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, I know a secret that many Nova Scotians may not know, but that a few tourists do. You can eat lobster in this Province in many, many ways!

Having lived in Shelburne County for over 20 years, I can tell you that lobster is often part of one's dining experience. As a girl's soccer coach, with many of the young ladies coming from fishing families, a typical "thank you" in December would be a half dozen fresh one-and-a-quarter pounders landing on my doorstep. Holiday lobster became a quickly adopted tradition. Schools in the tri-counties area may be one of the few places on earth where in the depths of the lobster season, if you keep your ears open, a lunchtime trade can be heard:

Student (looking in her paper bag at her sandwich) – "Oh crud, not lobster again!"

Me – "Do you want to trade?"

Student – "As long as it's not lobster – deal!"

This particular student had a mother who also made her own bread – my tuna fish sandwich on store-bought white bread was never handed over to someone else so quickly! Locals in Sable River relate the story that years ago lumbermen had in their contracts that lobster could only be served a maximum of twice a week at the lumber camp. We've come a long way.

In my family, and my wife's – whose Dad had a "recreational" lobster license in Cape Breton in the 1960s

– lobster eating meant the minimalistic route. The lobster was simply put in a pot of rapidly boiling salt water (or salted – three times around the pot with the spout of the salt box open). The critters were done when they turned bright red, and when, if you tried to lift them out by their "feelers", the antenna would pull off. Our routine was to have melted butter and some rolls on the side and enjoy them on our deck at the cottage. My wife's family routine was even more "direct" – they did the boiling right on the beach, in a pot full of St. Ann's Bay seawater, and threw in some ears of corn. I don't know to this day how she eats them without butter, but there you go, another way to enjoy them.

Many tourists and fellow Nova Scotians prefer to have someone else do the cooking, perhaps out of an unwillingness to be the "plunger", or perhaps not wanting to witness the "plungee" – like the hilarious scene in "Julie & Julia" where Amy Adams tries to cook a lobster that fights back (they don't really you know, and if you want to know how to make a lobster go to sleep, well, you'll have to invite my mother or me over).

In any case, this leads to more ways to sample the staple seafood dish of our area. In the 1950s, Clara Harris made a sandwich out of heated lobster in sauce and served it over bread, and thus the hot lobster sandwich, still available at the "Quick-N-Tasty" in Dayton, was born. There are other ways that the dish is served – for example, the difference between fish chowder and seafood chowder in western Nova Scotia is that the former has "just fish" for the sea fare, where the latter has lobster (and, in Digby County you're sure to find the addition of their famous scallops). Other ways involve delicious combinations, such as at "Charlotte Lane" in Shelburne where the lobster is served with scallops in a brandy, cream and cheese gratin sauce. This entree is so good that when one customer

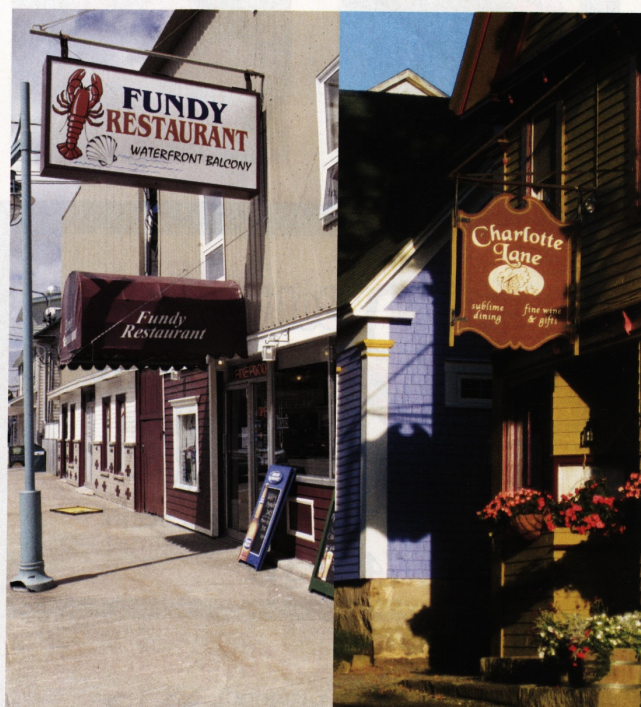


asked what the market price was on the dish, another customer, upon hearing the answer, chimed in "I'd pay that much just for the sauce!" In Annapolis Royal, the crustacean is offered up at the "Café Compose" in the form of a lobster linguine that is so good, it defies description.

A more basic dish, the standby of steamed lobster and butter, with or without side dishes, is, for some people, the true essence of the lobster experience. "Rudders" in Yarmouth, with a gorgeous view overlooking the harbour, knows this and banks on the local fishers and their steady supply and serves a steamed lobster special nightly. "The Fundy" restaurant in Digby has a similar setting and while they do a special baked lobster and scallops dish, they also serve steamed lobster or even sell live lobster for a "cook your own feast".

For the closest thing to a family style lobster boil, without the cook-it-yourself fuss, head to "Stanley's" at the Yarmouth Bar. Stanley's lobster facility holds the live lobster, you and your party show up, inspect the live lobster yourself if you so choose, and "Stanley" and crew will boil it up (or the do-it-yourselfers can take them home live!) Served either on the beach or in their new shelter, your freshly steamed lobster comes to you complete with butter, roll and a choice of corn on the cob or potato salad. Bonus, your experience is topped off with a dessert of strawberry shortcake. This all takes place in a warm and friendly atmosphere that is a true informal western Nova Scotia dining experience.

For those who want to have a taste of the sea, in an authentic setting and in any of a myriad of ways, the place to come dine on lobster is western Nova Scotia. For locals, just a reminder – why not drop down to the wharf and bring your bucket, there's a lobster for every pot!



Y'a d'l'Acadie dans l'air

July 29 juillet - Opening Concert / Spectacle d'ouverture:
Hommage à Herb LeBlanc Tribute, Baie en Joie & 1755!

July 31 juillet - Fais dodo en Acadie (cajun concert) /
Spectacle Fais dodo en Acadie :
Tee Mamou Cajun Band & Lost Bayou Ramblers, LA & Cadiens

August 1 août - Parade and Bazaar / Défilé et Bazar:
- Grand 5km street parade with over 100 entries. /
Grand Défilé sur 5km avec plus de 100 groupes représentés.
- Arts and crafts bazaar as well as games and traditional Acadian food. /
Bazar d'art et d'artisanats ainsi que jeux de chance et mets traditionnels

August 14 août - Spectacle Rock d'la Baie Concert
Young musicians from "Rock le bot", Bête and other guests /
les jeunes de Rock le Bot, Bête et d'autres invités

August 15 août - Tintamarre & Closing concert / Spectacle de clôture:
JP LeBlanc, Lennie Gallant, Baie en Joie & BeauPhare

Other activities / Autres activités:
President's night / Soirée du Président
Fiddler's night / Soirée des violoneux
Festival bonfire / Feu de joie du Festival
Festival hike / Marche du Festival
Order of Good Cheer Supper / Souper de l'Ordre du Bon Temps



From July 29th to August 15th 2010
Du 29 juillet au 15 août 2010

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