



**OUR ADVENTURE BEGAN** on a crisp and clear morning in the small historic town of Kennebunkport. Down by the docks alongside the Nonantum Resort ([www.nonantumresort.com](http://www.nonantumresort.com)), Captain Bob Danzilo and his first mate were busy preparing the FV Rugosa before setting out for the day's catch.

A handsome boat built in the classic Cape Codder style, the Rugosa ([www.rugosalobstertours.com](http://www.rugosalobstertours.com)) has been lovingly restored, and now spends her days plying the waters off Kennebunkport in search of one of the world's tastiest critters – the lobster. The Maine lobster, *Homarus americanus*, can grow up to 60 cm long, and weigh up to 20 kg – more than the weight of 10 chickens! Though hefty, its flesh is sweet and succulent. And thanks to local conservation efforts, it's also one of the most sustainable seafoods you can savour.

One of the best ways to learn about Maine's biggest export – more than 90 per cent of all lobster consumed in America comes from the chilly Atlantic waters off Maine – is by heading out to sea on an authentic lobster fishing boat. The Rugosa is no exception – Captain Bob is both passionate about what he does and eager to share it with others.

As we steam down the gorgeous, tree-lined Kennebunk River headed for the coastal shelf, Captain Bob keeps up a steady patter on the lifecycle of the humble lobster. We set a few traps, each marked with a colourful buoy – every fisherman has his own unique design – and before we haul them back up, we get a hands-on lesson in lobster fishing.

First, we learn how to band a lobster with what looks like a terrifying pair of giant pliers. Maine lobsters have two large claws, unlike the spiny Caribbean lobster. While the claws are often considered the most delicately flavoured and delicious part of the lobster, you don't want to risk getting pinched – an angry lobster can break a finger.

A lesson in measurement techniques comes next. To ensure we harvest the right lobsters and leave enough creatures of the

**LEFT:** HEAD TO MAINE FOR AN ENJOYABLE INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD OF THE HUMBLE - YET TASTY - LOBSTER. **BELOW:** THE ANCHORAGE AT BAR HARBOR

# A FISHY TALE

*By Elisabeth Lee*

*Savour the best seafood in North America along the beautiful coast of Maine*





TOP: A TRADITIONAL LOBSTER BAKE, BOTTOM: CATCHING AND BANDING YOUR VERY OWN LOBSTER IS A THRILL THAT CAN BE ENJOYED BY EVERYONE.

right size to breed the next season's catch, each lobster has to be measured with a pair of callipers – if a creature is too big or too small, it gets a fresh chance at a long life on the coastal shelf.

We all get a chance to practise before the captain decides we're ready to haul in our catch. Thankfully, there's a huge winch that does most of the hard work, but it still requires a strong, steady hand to bring in the traps, followed by a flurry of dextrous measuring and banding before we have an appetising selection of wriggly blue-green crustaceans ready for the pot.

**AWESOME IN EVERY WAY**

Creamy lobster thermidor, lobster bisque, lobster roll, lobster bake... the options for wolfing down this tasty crustacean are seemingly endless. And if you're in no mood to go out for your seafood feast, all you do in Maine is phone the local lobster pound, and a steaming whole lobster (with a side of melted butter) will be delivered to your doorstep lickety-split. It doesn't get any easier – or fresher – than this.

Lobster rolls – featuring steamed tail meat slathered in butter and/or mayonnaise and packed into freshly-baked buns – are

designed for those who don't want to get down and dirty with a whole lobster. Ask a local to direct you to their favourite lobster shack, or make the pilgrimage to the perennial favourite Two Lights ([lobstershacktwolights.com](http://lobstershacktwolights.com)).

For lobster with a little more oomph, try one (or more) of the award-winning lobster restaurants peppered up and down the coast of Maine. Don't miss the lobster fra diavolo at the Old Port Sea Grill ([www.oldportseagrill.com](http://www.oldportseagrill.com)) – a hearty Italian tomato sauce brings out the sweetness and brininess of fresh lobster, while a dash of chilli spices things up.

Another lobster restaurant making waves is Natalie's at the Camden Harbour Inn ([www.nataliesrestaurant.com](http://www.nataliesrestaurant.com)) – executive chef Chris Long was named Maine Lobster Chef of the Year in 2013, and his five-course lobster tasting menu features all the seasonal highlights of Maine, including oysters, sea urchin, artisanal cheeses and more.

**THE ALL-IN-ONE APPROACH**

If you're pressed for time, or if you just want to have it all, try the decadent two-night Catch a Piece of Maine package at the Inn By The Sea ([www.innbythesea.com](http://www.innbythesea.com), rates start at US\$1152), a five-star Maine resort that made Conde Nast's 2014 Gold List.

Spend the daylight hours on a lobster boat cruise around scenic Casco Bay before heading back to enjoy a relaxing



TOP: DON'T WANT TO GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY SHELLING A LOBSTER? TRY A LOBSTER ROLL INSTEAD

massage (the package comes with a US\$100 spa credit towards a treatment of your choice). In the evening, tuck into a lobster feast at the highly-rated Sea Glass restaurant – think lobster cerviche, lobster bisque, mini lobster roll, butter-poached lobster, herb grilled lobster and – finally – a lobster gelato.

No matter how you choose to while away the time, a summer in Maine, surrounded by some of the region's best seafood, is a summer well spent. Bon appetit! S

**HOW TO EAT A LOBSTER**



Purists say the best way to savour a fresh lobster is by enjoying it steamed and dipped in clarified butter. Park your manners at the door, roll up your sleeves and follow these steps:

- **FIRST, THE CLAWS.** Using your bare hands, twist of the claws – careful, they're hot! Crack the claws with the nutcracker provided and dig in.
- **NOW FOR THE TAIL.** Arch the lobster's back until you hear the tail crack. Bend the flippers on the end of the tail back until they break off. Push a fork into the base of the tail and extract the meat – if you've done it right, it should come out in one large (and yummy) piece.
- **HEAD FOR THE BODY.** Unhinge the back and tuck into the green liver, then crack open the body and dig out any of the meat that you've missed.
- **DON'T FORGET THE LEGS!** Suck the flesh out of the legs – while there isn't much meat to be had, legs are often the sweetest part.

Photos: VISIT MAINE