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Al fresco dining in Salem

By [Glen Hughes](#) on July 30th, 2010
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There is a new trend for Salem restaurants and its not some magical ingredient or new state mandated rule: it's going *au natural* with dining outside.

Al fresco dining in Salem, MA is nothing new. Salem institutions like the [Lobster Shanty](#) and [Finz](#) have predicated their business model on it. [Victoria Station](#) has some great al fresco action overlooking the wharf and Salem Light. Even [Capts.](#) with their second floor balcony understands people's desire to feel connected to the outdoors while refueling the body. However, recently a few things have changed and now everyone is clamoring to get in on the game.



The Lobster Shanty Salem

There was a time, not too long ago, that if you were in down town Salem and wanted to eat or drink outside under the stars (or an umbrella) your options were fairly limited. There was [Rockafellas](#), the Garden at the PEM, the aforementioned Lobster Shanty and, depending on its state of flux, the business now currently known as [Murphy's](#).

A few years back [Gulu-Gulu](#) came to town and added outdoor seating. Other Salem restaurateurs took notice and started playing that game. Some failed miserably like [Cafe Graziani](#) who tried to stuff a table or two out their back door in an alley under the constant hum of their kitchen air conditioner (they now have added 3 tables in front on the Washington St. sidewalk). Others, like [Fresh Taste of Asia](#) and [The Upper Crust](#), succeed despite not getting direct sunlight during prime dining hours.

Then the game changed again. [Tavern in the Square](#) opened in the old Salem News building, eventually adding one hundred seats outside and securing the rights to use the public sidewalk as part of their business much to the dismay of some residents and special interest groups. Like it or not, the president set by Tavern in the Square paved the way for more businesses to steak a claim to public walkways. [Maria's Sweet Somethings](#) has expanded its outdoor seating. Down town new-comer, [Puleo's Ice Cream](#) (next door to Cafe Graziani), has set up shop with tables and chairs on the cramped Washington Street sidewalk.



New outside seating at the Lyceum

The latest restaurants to throw their hats in the al fresco ring are [Greenland Cafe](#), with a sizable brick patio behind their location and a few feet away from the Greenland Cafe in the courtyard behind Church Street, the [Lyceum](#) just opened their patio featuring about 25 more seats.

Not to be left out of the quest for fresh air and sun shine, the city of Salem has stepped up and installed a bunch of tables and chairs in the Derby plaza area in front of [Old Town Hall](#) and around the East India Square fountain, free for everyone to use 24 hours a day.

I personally love good al fresco dining, when I can sit outside sipping a cocktail, eating a meal, not being distracted by loud noise or obnoxious smells and being treated to a nice view. Now, with patio dining pretty much saturated in Salem we will have to wait till next summer to see what the future holds. My prediction for the next trend in Salem dining...roof decks.

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All the bikers are now in town. If you are hungry don't bother with a restaurant, hit a vendor instead <http://twitpic.com/2yiwil>
 23 hours ago

Tomorrow is the Salem Harley ride @1:30 plan ahead as streets will be blocked off yesterday

Family Fright Night Movie Series on Salem Common 6-8pm. Tonight's free movie: Ghostbusters! Better bundle up, it's COLD out there!
 2 days ago

Salem Harvest Fest today: 2-4:30pm and 5:30-8pm, sponsored by Magic Hat & Pamplemousse! Go to the site for more info: <http://ow.ly/2Uv3Y>
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Upcoming Salem Events

- October 19, 2010
[Gulu's Monster Movie Madness](#) at 6:00 pm
- October 20, 2010
[Open Mic Night](#) at 6:30 pm
[Latin Dance Party](#) at 8:00 pm
- October 21, 2010
[Salem Farmer's Market](#) at 3:00 pm

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