



NEW ENGLAND

# GO ESCAPE

SUMMER 2018

## FEASTS & FESTIVALS

Savor clam cakes,  
county fairs

## NATURAL WONDERS

Hike, bike, ride  
through scenic vistas

## RELAXING RESPITE

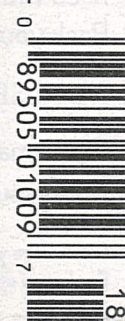
Best B&Bs,  
hotels, resorts

# Coastal Charm

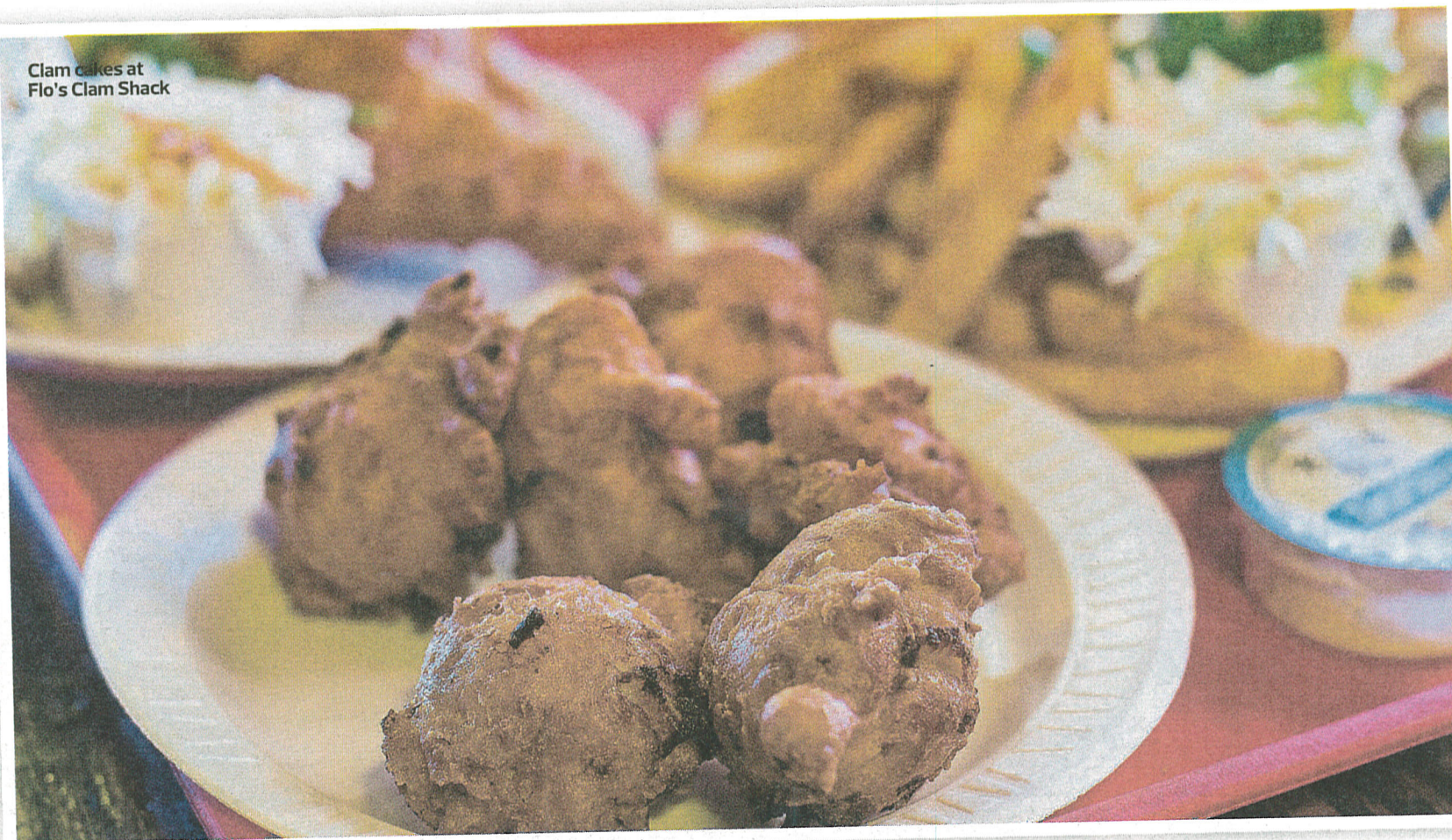
Relive history, explore hidden gems

The Charles River Esplanade in Boston

\$4.95





Clam cakes at  
Flo's Clam Shack

SETINMOTION.COM

# MOVE OVER, LOBSTER ROLL

Clam cakes offer regional flavor and a variety of tastes

By Alison Konecki

**D**ID SOMEBODY SAY CLAM cakes? "When you mention clam cakes to someone who's familiar with them, you'll get a big smile," says Komes Rozes, owner of Flo's Clam Shack in Middletown, R.I. A sort of savory fritter, Rhode Island clam cakes are deceptively simple. Little more than clams, flour, eggs and milk or water, the true magic of clam cakes is in the alchemy of textures — the crispy, deep-fried exterior, fluffy interior and the briny chew of clam. Outside

of Rhode Island, clam cakes are virtually unknown.

If lobster rolls have been able to make their way down the coast of Maine and into the hearts and stomachs of seafood lovers the country over, and clam chowder is a popular seafood staple, why hasn't the humble clam cake managed to cross state lines?

Rozes isn't sure why the clam cake is exclusive to Rhode Island, but he has a theory. Although soft-shell clams are plentiful throughout New England waters, they have a taste and texture too delicate

for clam cakes. Rather, it's the rich, salty, ocean taste and meatier bite of the quahogs (hard-shell clams) found in abundance off Rhode Island's shores that truly characterize a clam cake. "Only Rhode Island has the 'original' clam cake because the quahogs from Narragansett Bay are the finest in the world," Rozes says.

When the steely winter ocean begins warming to a rich blue and blooms of colorful umbrellas dot the shoreline, clam cake season unofficially begins. Although

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PETER HASSEL PHOTOGRAPHY (2); KENYON'S GRIST MILL

**DIY CLAM CAKES**

Can't make it to Rhode Island soon enough to quell your craving for these fried delights? Try making a batch using a mix from Kenyon's Grist Mill in West Kingston, R.I., ([kenyonsgristmill.com](http://kenyonsgristmill.com)) in your own kitchen.

they are enjoyed year-round, clam cakes, also called fritters, soar in popularity during the summer.

"Clam cakes remind everyone of some of (their) best times growing up in Rhode Island," says Rozes. "Days at the beach, clambakes ... memories of summertime fun."

After tumbling through seaweed-streaked waves and baking on towels under the hot sun, nothing satisfies hungry bellies quite like clam cakes fresh from the fryer and dipped into cups of creamy chowder (or rather, "chowda" — this is New England after all).

"If you're having a beach day, it's a foregone conclusion that you'll be getting clam cakes," says Rhode Islander Pete Raleigh. "It's part of the experience." Indeed, even though clam cake mixes are available (Kenyon's Grist Mill and Iggy's Doughboys & Chowder House both make popular versions), and clamming in shallow tidewaters across the state is not uncommon, clam cakes are largely enjoyed at local clam shacks.

Anthony's Seafood in Middletown uses Narragansett Beer in its clam cake

batter "for a grown-up taste," according to owner Stephen Bucolo. Aunt Carrie's in Narragansett fries the patties in beef shortening. In addition to the requisite quahogs, Flo's version includes a few chopped soft-shell clams for sweetness.

Every clam shack has a slightly different recipe — subtleties that often cause Rhode Islanders to swear allegiance to one place or another — but what remains consistent no matter where you go is the emphasis on fresh, local clams.

Often, the quahogs are dug the very day they are served, right off the shore from the restaurants where they are cooked. This landscape, with its tides rushing in and out, warm summer sun and ocean brine is what nourishes Rhode Island's quahogs day after day. It's why a taste of clam cakes becomes something far more elemental — the experience of Rhode Island itself.

**CLAM CAKE DESTINATIONS**

Great clam cakes are available throughout Rhode Island, but for the best overall experience, head to these coastal eateries:

**ANTHONY'S SEAFOOD MARKET AND RESTAURANT**

A great option for wintertime cravings, Anthony's serves up clam cakes and incredible chowder year-round, even when most of Rhode Island's clam shacks are shuttered for the winter.

► 963 Aquidneck Ave., Middletown; 401-846-9620; [anthonyseafood.net](http://anthonyseafood.net)

**AUNT CARRIE'S**

Aunt Carrie's, now in its fourth generation of family ownership, is one of Rhode Island's oldest and most beloved clam shacks. For the full Aunt Carrie's experience, the menu says, you have to have the "award-winning" clam cakes. You can order them by the half or full dozen or get a chowder combo that comes with three of the tasty treats.

► 1240 Ocean Rd., Narragansett; 401-783-7930; [auntcarriesri.com](http://auntcarriesri.com)

**FLO'S CLAM SHACK**

After a day in the waves at Sachuest Beach (known locally as Second Beach), head to Flo's for perhaps the best clam cake deal in the state. Their combo #1 pairs three clam cakes with a cup of chowder and a draft beer or soda for \$7.50.

► 4 Wave Ave., Middletown; 401-847-8141; [flosclamshacks.com](http://flosclamshacks.com)

**IGGY'S DOUGHBOYS & CHOWDER HOUSE**

Iggy's fries up delicious clam cakes and has the market cornered on merchandise, including T-shirts, hats, mugs and aprons. Homesick Rhode Islanders or the culinary curious can order the "Taste of Iggy's," which includes a half gallon of chowder and a half dozen each of clam cakes, stuffies (stuffed clams) and doughboys (fried dough).

► 1151 Point Judith Rd., Narragansett; 401-783-5608; [iggysdoughboys.com](http://iggysdoughboys.com)

**MONAHAN'S CLAM SHACK BY THE SEA**

Located off the Narragansett seawall overlooking Narragansett Beach, Monahan's is hands down the most scenically situated of Rhode Island's clam shacks. Clam cakes and other seafood favorites can be enjoyed on the adjacent picnic tables, or taken to-go and enjoyed as you stroll along the seawall.

► 190 Ocean Rd., Narragansett; 401-782-2524; [monahansri.com](http://monahansri.com)

— Allison Konecki

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