

June 2021

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NEWS GROUP

Foodies

EAT, LIVE, EXPLORE



Photo by Jenn Tanaka

\$5.95



SAIL AWAY

Catalina Island getaway uncovers respite – and great restaurants

BY JENN TANAKA

Summer travel is back! According to booking.com CEO Glenn Fogel, 85 percent of travel searches this year are for domestic destinations. Outdoors adjacent and beach locales piqued people's interest after being cooped up indoors much of the time last year.

Catalina remains a hotbed for Southern Californians. Previously, the island's food options were...let's just say "limited." But now, tasty and sustainable dining abounds in Avalon. From bougie locales such as Descanso Beach Club to the new Naughty Fox at Bellanca Hotel, the island is flush with flavor. Some dining tips for your next visit:



Descanso Beach Club

A 20-minute walk from the ferry transports is Descanso Beach Club, Avalon's only beachfront restaurant. Reserve a cabana or chaise lounge as you relax under white umbrellas dotted in the soft sand.

The ahi tuna sashimi with shaved cabbage, radish sprouts, pickled ginger and wasabi packs a spicy punch of flavor. The comfort food beach fare continues with crispy nachos covered in pulled pork or carne asada, house-made cheese sauce, pico de gallo, and avocado puree. The crowd-pleaser dish is large enough to share and pairs well with a bucket of icy Modelo Especial.

The kids can chomp on grilled cheeseburgers and splash in the ocean just feet away from your beach chairs. The complimentary water and towel service make for a relatively stress-free day at the shore. If you plan to venture into the water, one recommendation: bring a pair of beach shoes. Catalina's rocky coastline is rough on landlubbers' feet.

1 St. Catherine Way, Avalon

visitcatalinaisland.com/things-to-do/descanso-beach-club

Bluewater Grill

For happy hour, request a table on the waterfront patio and enjoy the sunset with a margarita in hand. Bluewater Grill's menu is flush with sustainable seafood options such as oysters on the half shell, chipotle blackened swordfish and cedar plank salmon with roasted leek vinaigrette.

While watching yachts drift into the harbor, try a creative cocktail or a sizable oyster shooter. There are three options: a Michelada version with a salted rim, beer, Worcestershire, tabasco and lime; the Island oyster shooter with tequila, orange juice, black currant, lime and ginger beer; and the Bloody Mary-inspired Shucker's Choice with vodka, horseradish and lemon.

The creamy New England-style clam chowder and buttery lobster roll combined with that seaside ambience tempts you to stay overnight. A day trip isn't long enough to discover the wonders of Catalina.

306 Crescent Ave., Avalon

bluewatergrill.com/locations/catalina-island





Toyon Grill

Taking the morning ferry over? Stop for breakfast at Toyon Grill where they offer up yummy selections from savory to sweet, like avocado toast with egg and charred scallion cream, a chorizo-laden burrito with scrambled eggs, tomatillo salsa and cotija – and a brioche French toast that's not-to-miss. Enjoy it all on the second-floor patio with a view of the sparkling harbor.

708 Crescent Ave., Avalon

toyongrill.com

The Naughty Fox at Bellanca Hotel

The recently opened Bellanca Hotel is a welcome addition to Catalina's thoroughfare. The in-house restaurant, The Naughty Fox, concocts a delicious Buffalo Milk. The official cocktail of Catalina is a nod to the resident bison herd that roams the island. Originally created on Harbor Reef in Two Harbors, the drink sips like a chocolate banana-flavored White Russian.

The menu is inspired by the Mediterranean. The blackened fish is sandwiched inside a brioche bun, and the creamy scallop chowder and mac and cheese are family favorite (read: kid-friendly) options. Finish your meal with the cookie sampler with white chocolate macadamia nuts, rocky road and toffee cookies paired with – you guessed it – Buffalo Milk. Yee haw!

111 Crescent Ave., Avalon

bellancahotel.com/the-naughty-fox

Scoops Ice Cream

Swing by Scoops Ice Cream shop, where the house-made ice creams and gelato are often a last treat for guests before boarding the ferry back to the mainland.

The amarena cherry gelato can be a tad syrupy, but the salted caramel Straciatella and mint chip ice cream will satisfy your sweet tooth. The creamy vanilla will make the kids go giddy, especially after they scope out the wide selection of toppings!

For diners seeking a dairy-free and somewhat healthy option, try the dark chocolate dipped banana. It's a Southern California classic and a sweet finish for any Catalina getaway.

501 Crescent Ave., Avalon

scoopscatalina.com