



LIFESTYLE > TRAVEL

Shuttered vacation spots give back to the community



MARCH 26, 2020 – The “Off the Menu” Food truck from Ocean House in Watch Hill, R. I. has been delivering free lunch to local children. Photo courtesy Ocean House public relations

By **MOIRA MCCARTHY** |
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News from...



434,182 unique
visitors monthly

Right now, we can't zip off to our favorite travel spot. Most are shuttered; all are in some kind of reduced mode of operation. And we've all been advised to stay home.

But that does not mean our favorite destinations are taking this sitting down. In fact, many of our favorite places are busy doing for others. There are many examples, here are a few:

Ocean House, Watch Hill, R.I.: One of the extra special things about a visit to the Ocean House (and there are many, Taylor Swift being their next door neighbor is just one of them), is the food. With top-notch chefs and their teams putting out great fare, there's almost nothing like tucking into one of their meals on the terrace, in the expansive dining room with sweeping ocean views and, of course, via room service.

While all that is on hold, the hotel's team is doing something remarkable: bringing that same gourmet touch to neighbors in need around the area. In light of temporary school closures in Rhode Island due to COVID-19, Ocean House Management Collection (consisting of Relais & Chateaux Ocean House and Watch Hill Inn in Watch Hill, Weekapaug Inn in Weekapaug, R.I., and the Inn at Hastings Park in Lexington) will be delivering free lunches to local children 16 and under.



MARCH 26, 2020 – An “Off the Menu” staffer hands a free meal from the food truck from Ocean House in Westerly, RI. Photo courtesy Ocean House public relations

The collection’s food truck, dubbed Off the Menu, sets up at Westerly Skating Rink three times a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., offering a selection of nutritious meals to Westerly area communities. While the options will vary daily, the Forbes five-starred culinary team will distribute sandwiches, salads, soups, fruit and more. The meals are free to anyone 16 and under and will be served at least through April 1. Sister property the Inn at Hastings Park is looking to do the same in the Lexington area. Details can be found on the resorts’ Facebook pages.

India Restaurant, Providence, R.I.: Driving to Providence for a night on the town and an epic dinner is a great New England outing choice. While restaurants struggle to make things work, many are focusing on helping others now. India Restaurant on Hope Street (indiarestaurant.com/newsite/), a 25-year Providence institution under the leadership of Amar Singh, is offering free to-go meals to nurses, firefighters, police officers and other workers on the front lines of the coronavirus outbreak. Employees of the restaurant set up a kiosk outside with buffet-style food and a large banner reading “Free meals for frontliners.” The free meals will be offered daily. The restaurant is also open for takeout and delivery, so you can support this effort.

Jay Peak Resort, Jay, Vt.: Jay Peak was one of the first ski resorts across the nation to make the decision to shut down Yet as they did so, the resort amped up its support for the community, focusing on keeping employees and the region whole.

“We immediately grabbed all the food we could from our restaurants and on-campus grocery stores and bagged groceries for all 1,200 of our staff members and disbursed it to them on Monday,” Jay Peak Resort President Steven Wright said of those first days. And that was after they’d created and packed a to-go lunch for all. They also waived all employee rents “for the duration of the shutdown, and are feeding essential workers that we keep on campus,” Wright said.

They also built a drive through from which they can serve dinners to employees who are not working.

The entire Jay Peak campus has been designated an emergency command center for the region where, if needed, they can supply clean rooms, disinfected lodging units and kitchen facilities for rescue workers, volunteers and others who might be needed.

Caledonia Spirits, Montpelier, Vt.: Caledonia Spirits has seen booming business in recent years both in merchandising and in visits to their distillery, where they craft Barr Hill Gin, Barr Hill Vodka and Tom Cat Gin. When they had to shut those distillery doors because of all this, they thought: Why not do some good? They've shifted some of their production, adding hand sanitizer to the list, and not for profit. With the raw materials needed to make it already on hand, the distillery's team got together and started producing hand sanitizer for local nonprofit organizations. Their first delivery was to the Vermont Foodbank on March 18.



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MARCH 26, 2020 - The Caledonia Spirits distillery's team got together and started producing hand sanitizer for local nonprofit organizations. Its first delivery was to the Vermont Foodbank on March 18. Photo courtesy Caledonia Spirits public relations



The distillery plans on continuing to make this hand sanitizer for additional local organizations while its supplies last. Last week, they just committed to making another 1,500 units for first responders for which the State of Vermont will be paying for the raw materials. They're asking for help, too (in case your favorite business wants to chip in). Reach out at info@caledoniaspirits.com.

There are so many more examples and we will share again soon. In the meantime, remember that the time will come when we can visit these destinations as guests again.