

SOURCE MAINE LOBSTER WITH CONFIDENCE

A BUYERS GUIDE TO PRODUCTS,
SUPPLIERS AND BEST PRACTICES



A NOTE FOR THE BUYER

In the modern restaurant scene, the process of deciding which products to provide to your customers can be challenging. From having to ensure the quality of premium products to calculating costs accurately to sourcing products efficiently, there are many moving parts when deciding what products to buy.

There's one protein that procurement specialists can rely on to be high-quality, fresh and exciting to customers: Maine Lobster. With a legacy of customer satisfaction and a history of sustainability, Maine Lobster is known to have reliable quality/quantity control, so you can accurately calculate costs and source domestically.

We created this guide to eliminate uncertainty and empower you to source Maine Lobster with absolute confidence. Inside, you'll find everything you need to master the Maine Lobster procurement process.

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LEVERAGE THE LEGACY OF MAINE LOBSTER

No matter the dish or the occasion, Maine Lobster elevates a meal and turns it into an opportunity to indulge. As the ultimate symbol of quiet luxury dining, this premium protein is a favorite among customers because of its rich legacy, flavor and sustainability story.



THE LEGACY

The Maine Lobster fishery became a tradition in the 1600s, long before the state of Maine was established. Since then, it has become a bedrock of the state's culture and economy. For generations, lobstermen have passed on their traditions and practices to ensure the long legacy of the fishery.

THE FLAVOR

Maine's pristine and cold waters naturally marinate Maine New Shell Lobster to create the most tender and sweetest lobster on Earth.

THE SUSTAINABILITY STORY

The Maine Lobster fishery is the gold standard in sustainable fishing. To protect the marine environment and lobster resource, Maine lobstermen implemented their first sustainability measures in 1872 and have continued to add new regulations that ensure a fishery for the next generation.

More than
80%
of America's lobster
is caught in Maine

100%
of Maine Lobsters are
harvested from small
owner-operated day boats

Maine Lobster is
comprised of
5,000+
independent lobstermen

Maine Lobster
contributes more than
\$1 BILLION
to the state's economy
each year

MEET THE *MAINE* CHARACTERS

LUKE HOLDEN

Portland, Maine

Luke comes from three generations of lobstermen and even built his own lobster boat in high school. After going to college and working on Wall Street, Luke realized quickly that the finance life wasn't for him. Craving a taste of home in New York City, Luke worked with his co-founder Ben Conniff and his dad to open Luke's Lobster. At home, Luke, his wife and his three daughters will go on the water together to haul traps and partake in the Holden family tradition.



LEARN ABOUT MAINE LOBSTER'S SUSTAINABILITY STORY

The Maine Lobster fishery is one of the most sustainable fisheries in the world. The fishery adapted their techniques, equipment and practices to meet changing environmental needs. Over the years, this has meant initiatives like:

- **TAIL NOTCHING** to safeguard breeding females
- **LIMITING TRAPS** per harvester to manage effort on the fishery
- **SETTING SIZE LIMITS** on legal lobsters to maximize breeding potential
- **MANDATING APPRENTICE PROGRAMS** to ensure young lobstermen learn sustainability measures



"I am so proud of the commitment to sustainability that our fishermen practice every day. It not only helps maintain a healthy fishery for the next generation but also maintains a healthy ocean."

TOM MARTIN
LOBSTERMAN

Cape Elizabeth, Maine



MEET THE *MAINE* CHARACTERS

SADIE SAMUELS

Rockport, Maine

Ever since Sadie was little, she always wanted to go on her dad's lobster boat. After convincing him to take her out on his boat, Sadie quickly fell in love with lobstering. Now she runs her own lobster boat with 800 traps and owns a restaurant called Must Be Nice Lobster in Belfast, Maine — a business she built up from a farmer's market stand. Sadie is passionate about educating people on Maine Lobster's sustainability, and that there are young women in this industry.

OFFER MAINE LOBSTER

IN VARIOUS WAYS

Maine Lobster suppliers offer fresh and frozen products in a range of sizes. Popular forms of Maine Lobster include whole lobster, tail, knuckle and claw meat; value-added products; and mince.

MAINE LOBSTER SIZING

To maintain sustainability measures, we have minimum and maximum size limits that range from 3.25” to 5” along the carapace. These 3.25” to 5” Maine Lobsters range in weight from about 1 lb. to about 4 lbs., with 1.25 lbs. being a very common size.



PROCESSED PRODUCTS

IN SHELL	LOBSTER MEAT
Whole lobster	Tail, Claw, Knuckle Meat (TCK)
Whole tail	Claw, Knuckle Meat (CK)
Split tail	Claw, Knuckle, Leg Meat (CKL)
Lobster shell and body	Mince

MEET THE *MAINE* CHARACTERS

SONNY BEAL

Beals Island, Maine

Ever since he could remember, Sonny has spent countless hours on the water. From hauling traps to measuring lobster to learning about sustainable practices, Sonny’s father taught him the ins and outs of being a lobsterman. Over time, he’s used his father’s wisdom and built upon it by working with his wife to start a vinyl lettering business for boats and vehicles. He’s proud to see their custom work on boats across Beals Island when he goes out to catch lobster.



WHOLE MAINE LOBSTER

Whole Maine Lobsters can be purchased live or frozen, and frozen whole lobsters can be purchased cooked or raw.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR YOUR SUPPLIER



1. Is this *Homarus americanus*?

2. Where did the lobster come from?

3. Is this New Shell or Hard Shell?

4. How was this frozen?



PROPER STORAGE & HANDLING

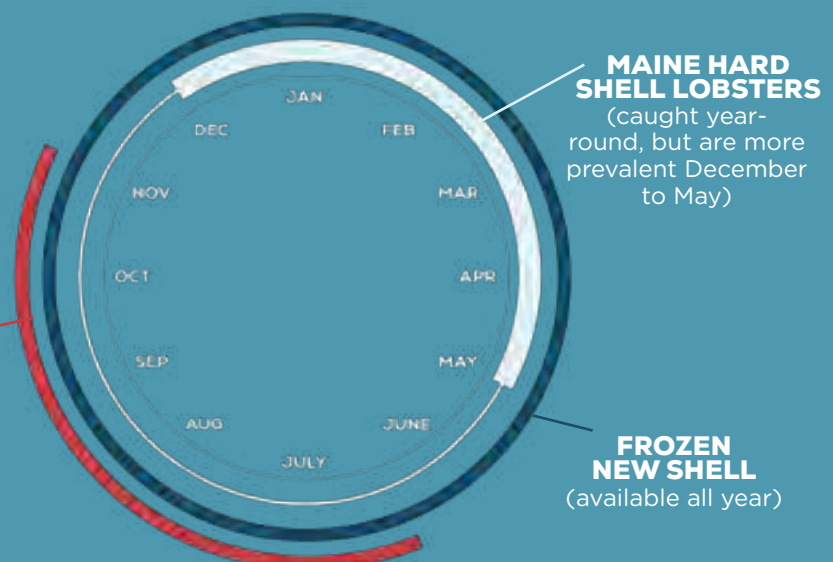
- Live Maine Lobsters are most often hand packed in wine crate-style insulated coolers, topped with damp newspaper to preserve moisture. From the sea to your doorstep, the live product is handled carefully to protect its quality and flavor.
- Live lobster should be cooked the same day it is delivered, especially if its claws have begun to droop down. If your lobster maintains its vitality, holding its claws up, this lobster can be kept another day if stored properly in a refrigerator with a damp cloth.
- Frozen whole lobsters should remain in original packaging until ready to be served and should be enjoyed within three to six months of freezing for optimal taste.

WHEN CAN I BUY NEW SHELL MAINE LOBSTER?

New Shell Maine Lobster is coveted for its softer, easy-to-crack shell and tender, sweet flavor. While you can buy it live from about mid-June to November, it's also available frozen year-round.

PEAK NEW SHELL SEASON
(when New Shell Maine Lobster can be bought live worldwide)

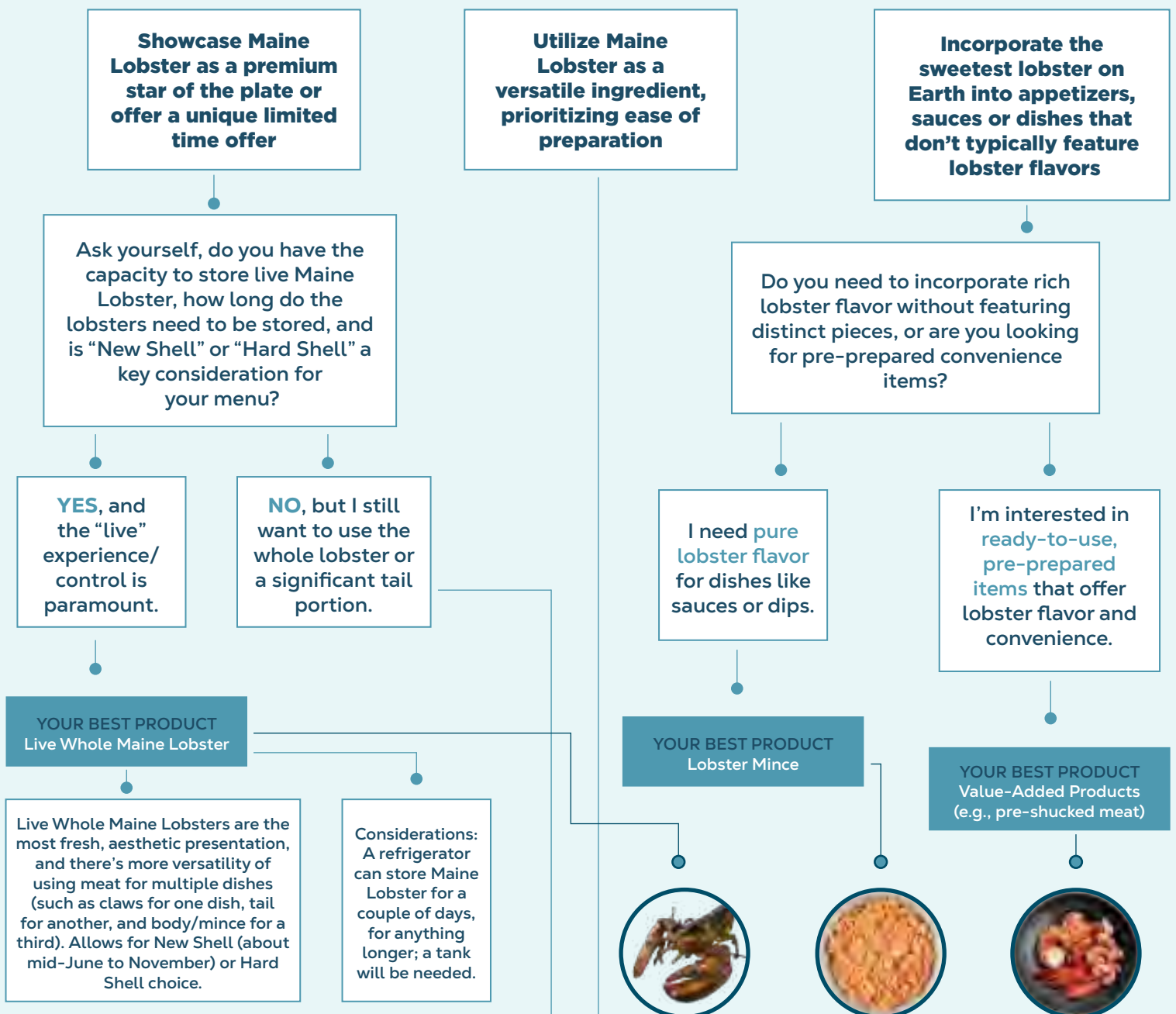
MAINE LOBSTER AVAILABILITY



FIND THE RIGHT MAINE LOBSTER PRODUCT FOR YOU

Whole or tails? Live or frozen? Maine Lobster offers a range of products, but it can be challenging to determine which product you should purchase. This flow chart breaks it all down for you so buying Maine Lobster is a breeze.

WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON YOU'RE PURCHASING MAINE LOBSTER?



Do you require the full visual impact of a whole lobster, or is an iconic tail sufficient for your premium presentation?

I need the impact of a **whole lobster**, but without the live handling.

YOUR BEST PRODUCT
Frozen Whole Maine Lobster

(Available Cooked or Raw)

A Maine Lobster tail is perfect for my premium dish.

YOUR BEST PRODUCT
Maine Lobster Tails

(Available in-shell whole and split or pre-shucked; fresh, frozen, pre-cooked or raw)

What is your priority: maximum labor savings, or control over the final cook of pre-shucked meat?

I need maximum labor savings and ready-to-use product.

YOUR BEST PRODUCT
Picked Maine Lobster Meat (Cooked)

I want pre-shucked meat, but I want to cook it myself to control the texture and flavor.

YOUR BEST PRODUCT
Picked Maine Lobster Meat (Raw)

Do you need specific combinations of meat (e.g., mostly claw and knuckle), or a general mix?

I need a specific combination for my recipe

YOUR BEST PRODUCT
TCK (Tail, Claw & Knuckle), CK (Claw & Knuckle), CKL (Claw, Knuckle & Legs)

A general mix of meat works for my versatile applications.

YOUR BEST PRODUCT
Picked Maine Lobster Meat



UTILIZE MAINE LOBSTER TAILS TO THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL

Maine Lobster tails are a popular item and come in a variety of formats, including in-shell whole and split tails and pre-shucked tail meat. All can be shipped worldwide in frozen, cooked or raw formats and are available for purchase year-round.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR YOUR SUPPLIER

1. Where did the lobster come from?
2. Where is the lobster processed?
3. How was the lobster processed/frozen?
4. What certifications does the company have?

PROPER STORAGE & HANDLING

- All Maine Lobster products should remain in their original packaging until ready to be served.
- All frozen lobster tail products should be enjoyed within three to six months of freezing for optimal taste.
- All thawed tails should be kept under refrigeration and enjoyed within two to three days of thawing.

“

Consistency of sizing is extremely important. If I order 4- to 5-ounce lobster tails and I get a 10-ounce box, I should know how many lobster tails will be in that box.”

DAVE QUILLEN PARTNER

Joe's Seafood, Prime and
Steak and Stone Crab at
Lettuce, Entertain You
Enterprises, Inc.

INCORPORATE PICKED MAINE LOBSTER MEAT

Some of the most popular picked Maine Lobster products are claw and knuckle meat, which can be purchased either raw or cooked. These products are available fresh or frozen worldwide.

While tail, claw and knuckle meat is often packaged and sold together, other popular packages include claw and knuckle meat; or claw, knuckle and leg meat. The package you choose to purchase will depend on the type of recipe you are preparing.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PRODUCT

Communicating closely with your Maine Lobster wholesaler ensures you can get precise quantities and combinations of picked meat packaged together or separately as:

**TAIL, CLAW, AND
KNUCKLE (TCK)**

**CLAW AND
KNUCKLE (CK)**

CLAW, KNUCKLE, LEG (CKL)

WHEN TO USE MAINE LOBSTER MEAT

- TCK lobster meat is most often used in dishes like lobster rolls, pastas, salads and more.
- CK meat can be used on its own in lobster rolls and salads and is also used in dishes such as lobster mac and cheese.



KEY QUESTIONS FOR YOUR SUPPLIER

1.

**Where did
the lobster
come from?**

2.

**Where is
the lobster
processed?**

3.

**What is the
drained
weight?**

4.

**What
certifications
does the
company have?**

INCLUDE MINCE & VALUE-ADDED

In addition to being offered as a “center of the plate” option, Maine Lobster is also a popular ingredient in appetizers and dishes which incorporate lobster flavor, but do not feature lobster visually, such as lobster ravioli or lobster dip.

Lobster mince is perfect for these recipes and is often incorporated into pre-prepped value-added products.



• MINCE

Maine Lobster mince is obtained by extracting all of the meat from the shell, beyond just the meaty TCK areas. Mince is perfect for lobster ravioli, lobster dip and a host of other recipes that call for rich lobster flavor without heartier pieces of meat.

VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS •

Maine Lobster wholesalers and processors offer a host of value-added products, including pre-shucked meat, spreads, lobster mac and cheese, and ravioli. These products allow restaurants and retailers to incorporate the delicious flavor of Maine Lobster into their offerings and provide consumers with an easy option that goes beyond the center of the plate.



FROM MAINE'S COAST TO YOUR RESTAURANT

The Maine Lobster industry services retail, wholesale, food service and consumer buyers, and takes great measures to deliver the highest quality products to customers worldwide. The industry is constantly working to advance techniques which maintain quality and freshness for lobster products in transit.

When considering a lobster purchase, be sure to ask your lobster supplier which technique they use to preserve the freshness and sweet, sought-after flavor of the product, and why.

FOR PROCESSED & FROZEN LOBSTER PRODUCTS, TECHNIQUES TYPICALLY INCLUDE:

- 1. High pressure processing
- 2. Traditional shucking
- 3. Liquid nitrogen flash freezing
- 4. Vacuum-sealed packaging



“The quality of our product is always a motivation for me — I’d never want to work making or selling a product that I didn’t believe was the best in the world.”

BEN CONNIFF
CO-FOUNDER OF
LUKE’S LOBSTER
Portland, Maine



FREEZING TECHNIQUE

Freezing Maine Lobster makes it even easier for diners around the world to enjoy Maine’s favorite crustacean. Frozen products offer many advantages to professional chefs and consumers alike, providing a longer shelf life than live products, keeping their flavor longer and reducing kitchen labor costs.

Throughout the freezing process, the Maine industry takes great care to preserve the texture and flavor of our products, investing in new technologies and constantly evaluating opportunities to make sure that the lobster that arrives at your door is as delicious as lobster enjoyed right off the dock.

Maine processors use superior nitrogen freezing for transporting lobster, so the cell walls don’t break down in the meat, preserving the fresh taste and texture.

NITROGEN

Nitrogen is the quickest and most modern method of freezing — taking as little as 18 minutes — and preserves the fresh natural flavor and texture of the lobster. In a tunnel freezer, sub-zero nitrogen vapors are pumped into the chamber, surrounding the lobster and freezing it on contact. The nitrogen immediately turns into a gas when it comes into contact with the product, creating very minimal dehydration losses.



LIVE MAINE LOBSTER

SHIPPING & HANDLING CHECKLIST

There are certain steps we recommend when shipping, handling and storing live Maine Lobster to ensure order accuracy and freshness.

HANDLING AND STORING LIVE LOBSTER

- ☐ Avoid dropping or throwing boxes that contain live lobsters when unloading them at your facility.

- ☐ Many shipments will include temperature monitors. Review the data on your monitors to ensure there have been no discrepancies in temperature throughout the shipping process. If there have been, contact your supplier. Gel packs that are no longer frozen or cold at the time of delivery could be an indicator of this.

- ☐ Remove lobsters from their packaging one at a time, grabbing them by the body, or carapace, whenever possible.

- ☐ If you do not have a tank in which to store live lobsters, keep them in their original packaging and place the boxes in a refrigerator.

- ☐ Have regular conversations and trainings to make sure that each employee and third party that interacts with your Maine Lobster shipment understands these rules and best practices.

FIND THE RIGHT SUPPLIER FOR YOU

There are a variety of wholesale Maine Lobster suppliers to choose from depending on the product you need.

Visit <https://lobsterfrommaine.com/how-to-buy> to order from these suppliers.



MEET THE *MAINE* CHARACTERS

KATIE & THOM WERNER

Peaks Island, Maine

Katie and Thom Werner grew up just 6.7 miles apart in Maine, spending winters on the ice and summers on the water. After marrying and raising two children in Maine, Thom continued his family's legacy as a lobsterman while Katie worked at Maine Health. When an iconic Peaks Island restaurant became available, they saw an opportunity to create something that could be passed down to their kids; and The Island Lobster Co. was born. Today, Katie and Thom proudly serve food that's truly sea to table, with nearly all of the restaurant's lobster coming right from Thom's boat.



UNLOCK MORE MENU POTENTIAL WITH MAINE LOBSTER

The premium story of the Maine Lobster brand can also drive a premium price up and down the menu from appetizer to entrée and breakfast to dinner. Across all dishes, the inclusion of Maine Lobster increases potential revenue opportunity by an average of 17% over dishes listed as generic “lobster.” Maine Lobster uplevels every meal and turns it into an occasion that benefits both consumers and business owners. Customers enjoy this premium protein because of its signature flavor — and businesses enjoy menu evolution that drives revenue.

OUR PREMIUM STORY DRIVES A PREMIUM PRICE

	PRICE WITH LOBSTER	PRICE WITH MAINE LOBSTER	INCREASED REVENUE OPPURTUNITY
All Dishes	\$39.46	\$46.17	17%
Appetizer	\$35.45	\$52.90	49%
Entrée	\$42.49	\$45.51	7.1%

Source: 2024 Technomic menu data



“People really want a luxury experience when they go out. We’re tailoring to what people are looking for when they come into our restaurant.”

JONATHAN ROSENBERG
VICE PRESIDENT
HOSPITALITY AND OPERATIONS
Purple Horse Hospitality

HOW TO MAXIMIZE A WHOLE MAINE LOBSTER

Maine Lobster is a premium product, and maximizing its value is key to profitability. Smart product choices and kitchen practices can significantly cut labor costs and reduce waste:

- Purchase picked Maine Lobster meat for dishes like lobster rolls, pastas and salads
- Simmer shells to create a rich Maine Lobster stock
- Extract every ounce of meat from whole Maine Lobsters

GET MORE WITH MAINE LOBSTER

ADDING MAINE LOBSTER CAN INCREASE REVENUE

With the rise of high-low dining and adventurous eating, Maine Lobster is the perfect premium protein to add a taste of affordable luxury to comfort food favorites.

Mac & Cheese

Average Price: \$14.81
With Maine Lobster: \$32.09



Build the ultimate burger by adding Maine Lobster mac & cheese on top.

Sandwiches

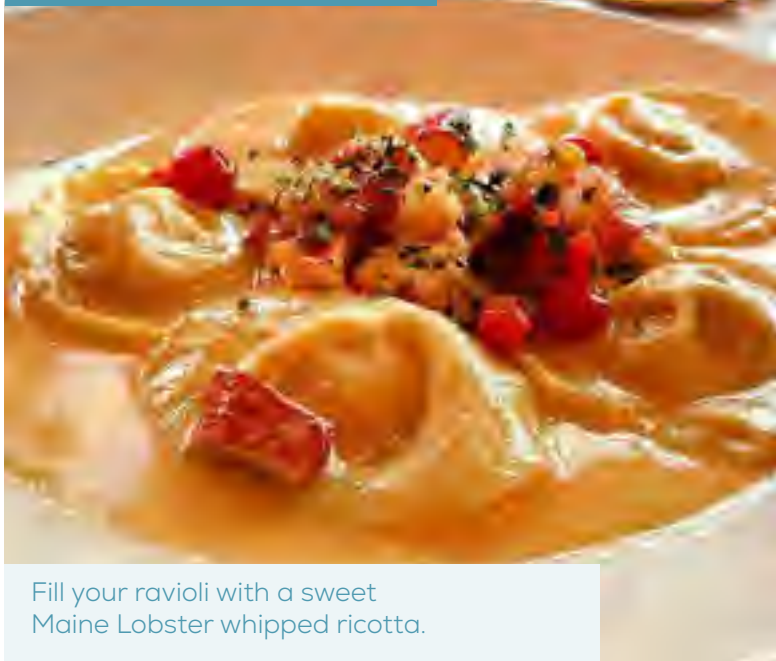
Average Price: \$13.28
With Maine Lobster: \$35.43



Elevate your sandwich with fresh Maine Lobster mango slaw.

Ravioli

Average Price: \$22.86
With Maine Lobster: \$34.33



Fill your ravioli with a sweet Maine Lobster whipped ricotta.

Salad

Average Price: \$12.62
With Maine Lobster: \$31.57



Take the traditional cobb to a new level with a Maine Lobster topping.

EXPLORE MORE MAINE LOBSTER RESOURCES

Find a supplier

<https://lobsterfrommaine.com/how-to-buy/>

Visit our website

<https://lobsterfrommaine.com/>

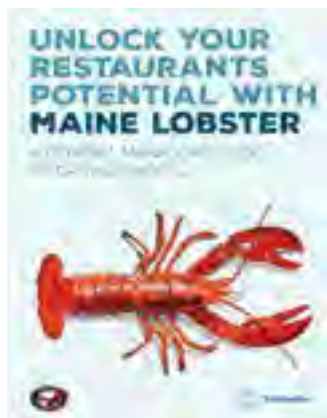
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