

Crack. Shuck. Savor Maryland.

Savor the fruits of the Chesapeake Bay on the Maryland Crab & Oyster Trail. Explore restaurants, seafood markets, tours, events and more in our five deliciously fun regions.



Eastern Shore (Lower Eastern Shore, Middle Eastern Shore, Upper Eastern Shore)

Maryland's Eastern Shore is known for its traditional watermen culture, where locals rise with the sun and work the waters to bring in the day's catch, bringing you fresh crabs from dock to table.



Central Maryland (Anne Arundel and Howard Counties, Greater Baltimore Area)

Central Maryland is an oyster lover's paradise, with oyster bars, oyster roasts and seafood festivals galore. It offers big city excitement and also small town charm and grace, with crab shacks accessible by both water and land.



Capital Region

Surrounding the nation's capital, you'll find waterfront seafood restaurants on the wide and lazy Potomac River. Further inland explore a culinary paradise in the city of Frederick.



Southern Maryland

Nestled between the Potomac and Patuxent rivers and the Chesapeake Bay, Southern Maryland abounds with quintessential crab houses and wharves that echo traditions from yesteryear. Escape from nearby metropolitan areas to relax with the tides in Southern Maryland.



Western Maryland

For the best of both worlds from the mountains to the sea, head west for a scenic drive or hike, and end your day with a traditional Maryland crab feast.

Steamed Hard Crabs

Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab is iconic--and tasty! A summer must-do is hand picking your own hard crabs at a waterside crab shack and sampling the succulent, sweet and tender crab meat. Topped with Old Bay, a traditional seasoning of the Chesapeake region, this unique mix of crushed pepper, paprika and celery salt, among other spices, adds flavor and heat to your fresh, piping hot steamed crabs.

Chesapeake Blue Crabs, swimming crustaceans, get their name from their bright blue claws. Once they are steamed, their olive green shells turn bright red. Crabmeat is a staple in many regional dishes including Maryland Crab Soup, cream of crab soup, crab cakes, crab imperial and more, but there are few things better than a spectacular sunset along the shores of the bay with cold Maryland craft beer and hot crabs.

Soft Shell Crabs

Early in the crab season, soft shell crabs are readily available and make for a delectable savory dish. Pan-fried with butter and seasonings or deep fried, soft shell crabs are a culinary adventure. Because the shell is soft, the crab is cooked and eaten whole.

Soft shell crabs are the same species as Chesapeake Blue Crabs, but they are harvested when the crabs are molting. Crabs shed their shells as they grow larger and no longer fit into their old exoskeleton. When their shell has been recently shed, the new larger shell is thin and papery at first, making for a soft shell crab--a not-to-be-missed Chesapeake delicacy!

Oysters

In the cooler months oysters are the Maryland seafood of choice. Oysters are traditionally harvested from the wild in months containing an "r." Try them raw from a variety of locations around the bay. The varying salinity and environments create wonderful flavor differences. After a dozen shucked oysters, go for a serving of creamy oyster stew, crispy fried oysters, or oyster rockefeller.

While wild oysters are still dredged from the bay, aquaculture farms are helping to increase oyster populations and provide oysters for year-round enjoyment. Some oyster farms offer tours and tastings. Take a skipjack cruise, the Chesapeake Bay's traditional oystering boat, to learn about the traditional methods of harvesting oysters--once called the white gold of the Chesapeake, because they were in such high demand.

Museums, Festivals and Events

Maryland serves up a diverse menu of seafood festivals, crab derbies and waterfront attractions. Explore maritime museums to discover what it was like to be a waterman in decades past. Try your hand at tonging or running a trotline, when you spend the day on a watermen's heritage tour. See the unparalleled majestic beauty of a skipjack or log canoe race, both traditional watermen's boats. Catch all the Chesapeake has to offer!

Maryland Seafood Industry Thrives

The Maryland Seafood website contains information about Maryland's Seafood Industry including Watermen's Biographies, Harvesting Techniques, and an online booklet, "A Guide to Maryland Seafood."

The Oyster Recovery Partnership helps improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay through the restoration of sanctuary reefs and by creating a supportive ecosystem for shellfish, aquaculture and fisheries. This in turn, improves water quality and fosters the increase in and sustainability of the oyster population in the Bay.