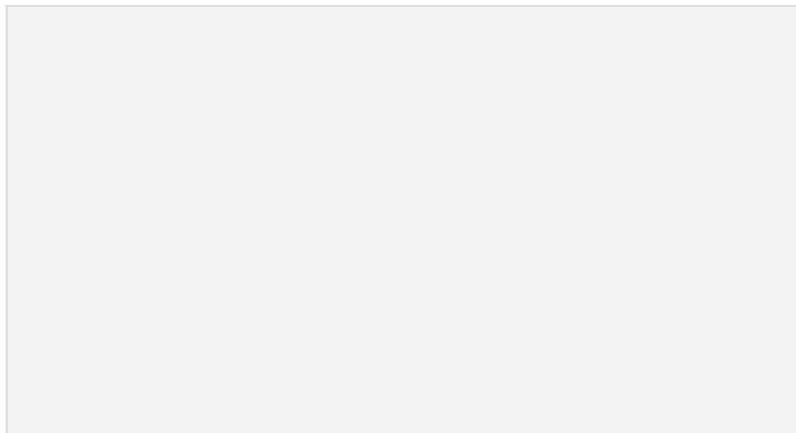


A Foodie's Introduction to Portland, Maine with Maine Foodie Tours

by Jan Ross | Food, Food blog | 0 comments

Portland, Maine was definitely not putting her best foot forward when we visited on a gray, rainy day in the fall. Our hopes for a lovely culinary walking tour were dashed by the icy, driving rain but being the penultimate foodies that we are, we persevered. We were in town for the day on a cruise and, with visions of whoopie pies and artisanal cheeses dancing in our heads, we put on our coats, pulled up our hoods and prepared to brave the elements.

We made our way through town to Commercial Street and the [Old Port Wine and Cigar Shop](#), where we were to meet our tour group for one of the charming tours provided by [Maine Foodie Tours](#). They offer several different foodie tours but we chose to participate in the [Culinary Walking Tour](#) because we thought it would offer a great introduction to this foodie city. The walking tour winds through the streets of Old Port and allow you to sample a variety of delectable, Maine-inspired foods and get a behind-the-scenes at those artists who create these culinary delights.





Welcome to the tour!

A hundred years ago, this area was home to fish houses, canneries, industrial factories, and textile mills but today the air is full of the smells of the fresh ocean breeze along with freshly brewed coffee, bakeries, and restaurants.

As you stroll along, the guides provide information about the history of the area and the products that you are sampling. The tours last about 3 hours, include a guide and food and beverage tastings, and have 14 people in each group. All ages are welcome but be sure to wear comfortable walking shoes.

Heading into the shop, we gathered together with our fellow foodies and our friendly and knowledgeable guide for the

afternoon and got our name tags so we were all official – and so they could make sure nobody was left behind, snogging down chocolates or cheese which was a distinct possibility once we tasted the delicious offerings.



Official name tag.

There was a huge selection of wine in the little shop, and our guide also showed us some really interesting local wines made from apples, raspberries and even the regional blueberries as well as some mead made from honey. Then we went next door to a little shop called [Vervacious](#) where there was a little more room for sampling. We each took a little sip of the offered sweet honey mead and excitedly began the taste testing that would last for the next couple of hours.

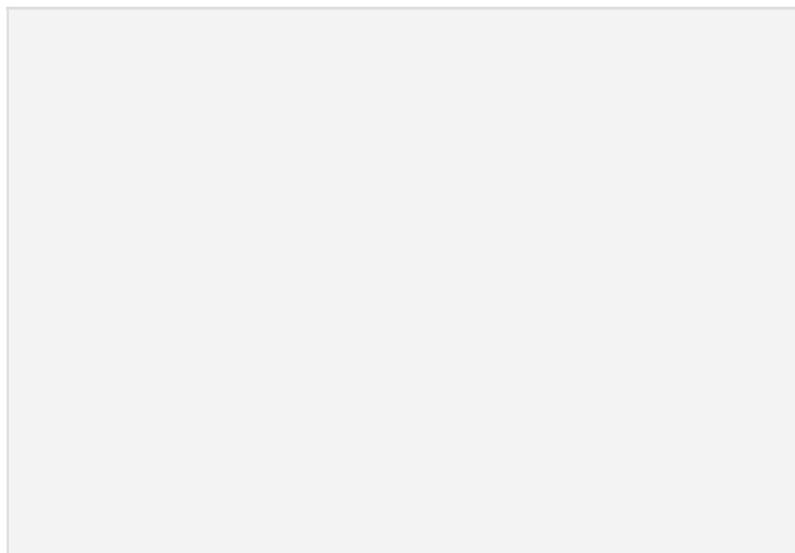


Honey Mead sampling.

Tom and I were not big fans of the mead but we were huge fans of the other items we sampled at Vervacious. Heidi, one of the founders of Vervacious, spent some time telling us about the origin of the shop. She and her husband sold their home and sailed around the world, eating and sampling luscious items all the way. Somewhere along the way, they came up with the idea of selling wonderful, travel-inspired fancy food items. Their culinary condiments would brighten up any meal and are available online as well as in gourmet food stores.



First, we tried some freshly cut, local apples with some sort of tangy spice shaken on them – delicious and tart! Then it was time for some drizzles – one with a coffee flavor and one chocolate. Not being a fan of coffee and a huge fan of chocolate, I was in love with this chocolate drizzle.





Spiced apples.

We were given a little time to shop at every location and we might possibly have come back to the cruise ship with a wide variety of food to take home – and even had some shipped!

After everyone had tasted and shopped to their heart's content, we headed up the street to the [Stonewall Kitchen](#) store, where I could have cheerfully settled in for the day. Not only do they have wonderful food items, they also have all kinds of kitchen gadgets, gifts and seasonal items. Hundreds of things!



Welcome to Stonewall Kitchen!

But first things, first – we were here to sample! Our guide

whipped out some freshly baked scones and instructed us to put the blueberry preserves on top and eat them. So, we hastened to obey. They were delicious and not only did we get to sample them, they had sampling stations set up all throughout the store. We seriously could have stayed all afternoon.

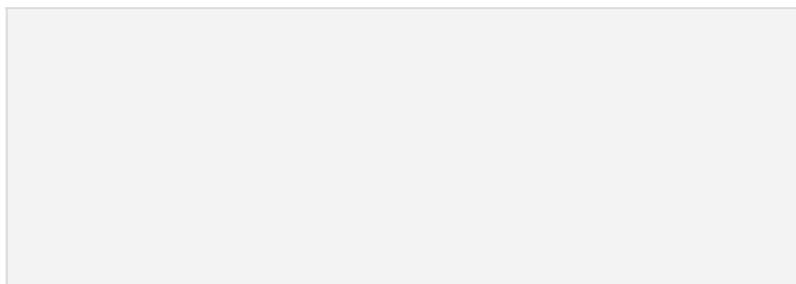


Scones and blueberry preserves.



Stonewall Kitchen samples.

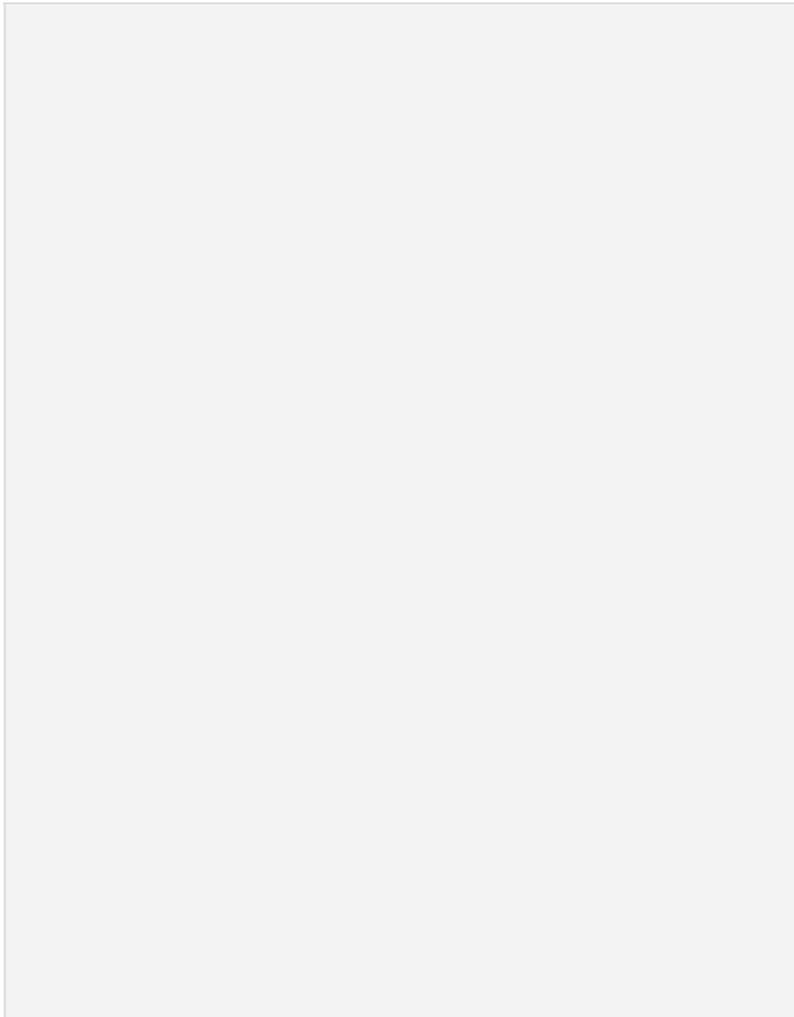
They have an online catalog, several stores and many of their products are also sold in kitchen supply stores – you can do a search on their website to find the closest location. After we had eaten our fill of every single, solitary sample in the store, we headed to our next culinary experience.





Shopping in Stonewall Kitchen.

Local, artisanal cheese was high on our list of expectations for this tour and they did not disappoint. Our next stop was [K. Horton Specialty Foods](#). With over 200 international cheeses and a large selection of local, artisan cheeses, we were in cheese heaven.





Welcome to K. Horton Specialty Foods!

Kris Horton talked to us a bit about her love of cheese and support for local cheese producers, then magically produced some quite delicious cheese samples.

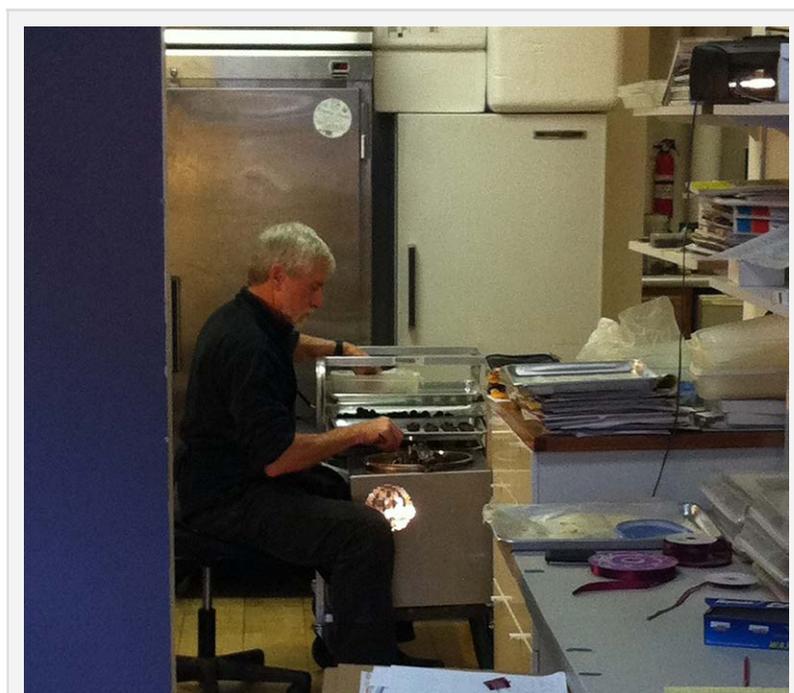


Cheese samples at K. Horton Specialty Foods.

There's only one thing that could rival the fabulousness that is cheese and that would be chocolate.



[Dean's Sweets](#) is a tiny little shop, filled with the rich smell of chocolate and the delicious, interesting fillings that Dean uses in his fillings. When we walked in, Dean was in the back making truffles, individually and carefully by hand. These are not just any old truffles – with rich dark chocolate and fascinating flavors like cayenne and ginger, they are truly unique and delicious.

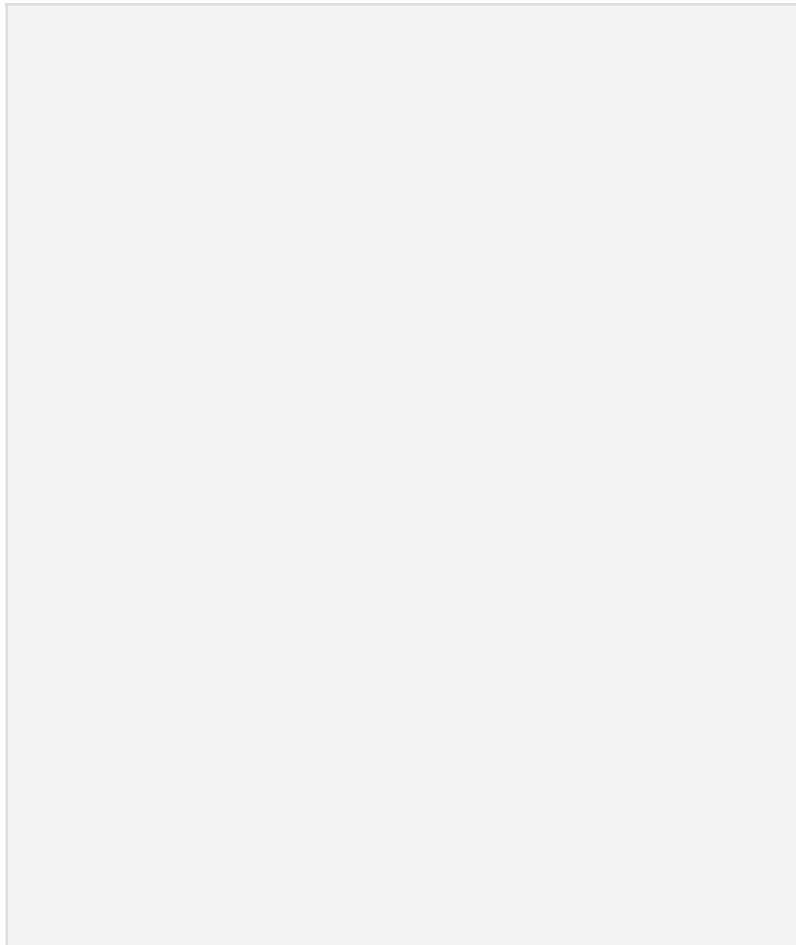


Making the sweets at Dean's Sweets!



Chocolates at Dean's Sweets.

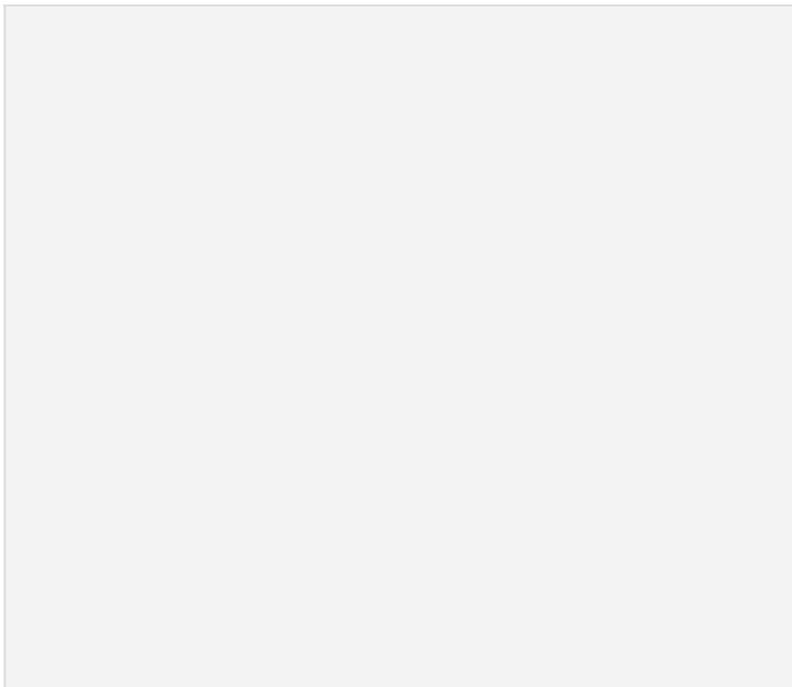
We still had a chocolate taste in our mouth as we left Dean's, but this did not prevent us from being excited about heading to [Two Fat Cats Bakery](#). Another tiny, little store filled with fabulous smells, this bakery was packed with wonderful, homemade items.





Welcome to Two Fat Cats Bakery!

But we were here for one particular Maine specialty – [whoopie pies](#). Sort of like a cake but cut in half and stuffed with whipped cream, these were completely fabulous in every way.



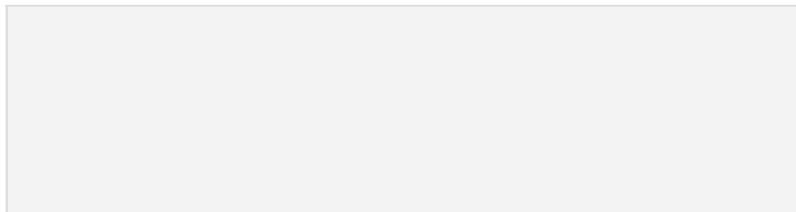


Whoopie pies for sale.



Whoopie Pie samples.

Satisfied with sweets at least for a while, we headed on to the [Harbor Fish Market](#). Located on the Portland Waterfront for over 30 years and run by the Alfiero family for that entire time, this is the best place to buy fresh seafood in Portland.

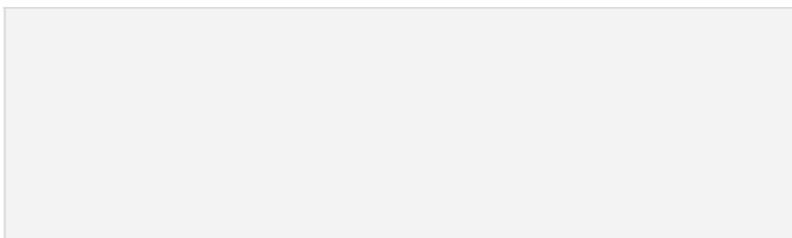


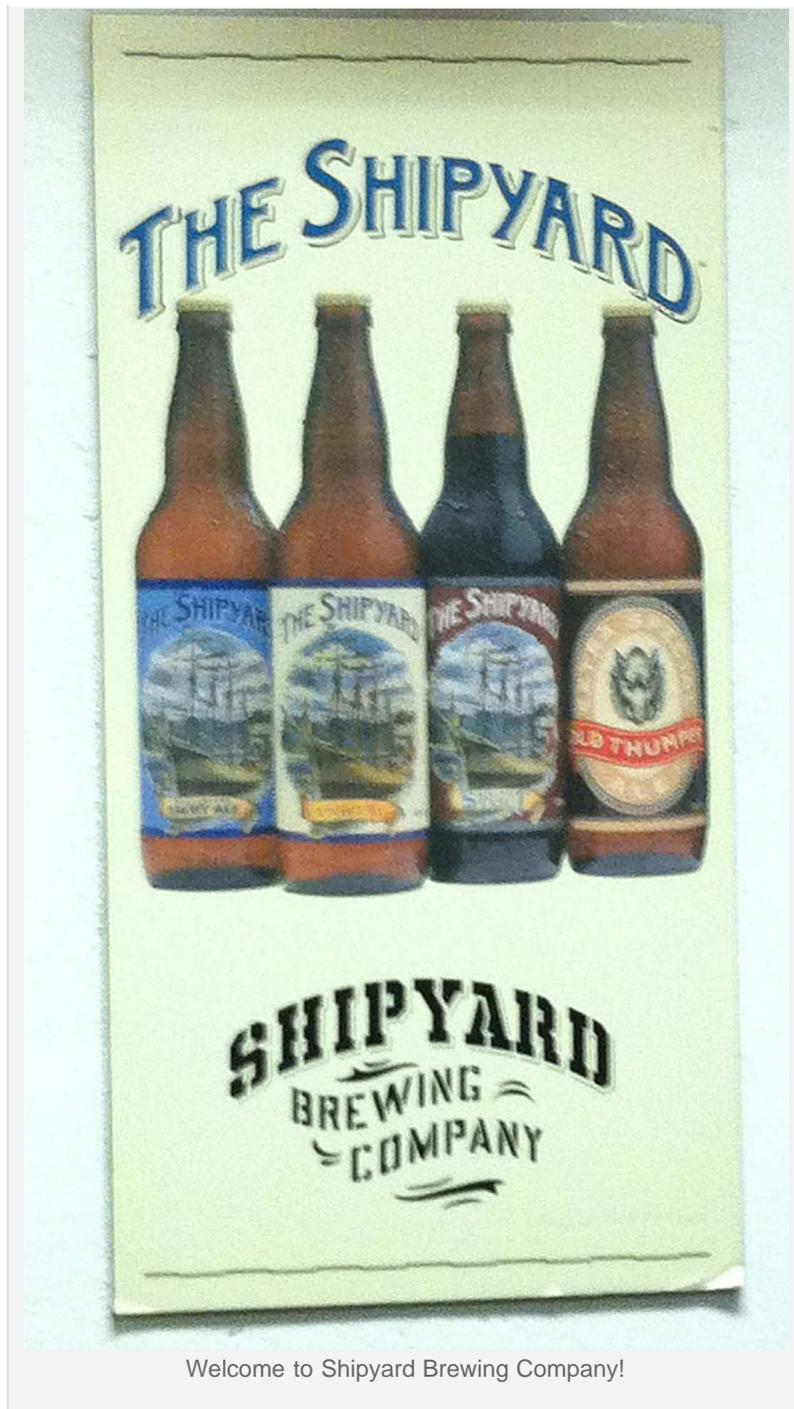


Filled with the clean, salty smell of fresh fish, this was the perfect place to sample some smoked trout.



Even being the dedicated foodies that we are, after a couple of hours of walking, we were ready to have a seat and a cold drink, so it was perfect that the tour was ending at the [Shipyards Brewing Company](#). We were treated to a tour, a video about this history of Shipyards Brewing and then we adjourned to the sampling area to try some of the brews made here in this local microbrewery.





Welcome to Shipyard Brewing Company!

Tom had fun sampling since he loves trying local brews and, since I am not a fan of brews, I sampled the ginger beer which was wonderful, tart and perfect to quench my thirst.

Luckily, the cold rain stopped just in time as our wonderful tour ended for us to stroll leisurely back to the cruise ship, allowing all our many delicious samples to settle and digest and enjoying Portland's lovely waterfront.

