

# A FEAST

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*A New York City restaurant specializing in smoked, cured, and canned seafood takes its inspiration from a beloved European culinary tradition—and the results are as transporting as they are delicious.*

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# FROM EVERY PORT

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Photographs by Matt Hranek

**AT SUNNY**, snug Maiden Lane in Manhattan's East Village, there is no kitchen. There's no open flame, no stove, no hissing grill. Yet every night, there are plates beautifully arranged with plump, succulent squid, their legs stuffed into their cavities, and wedges of briny mackerel, and coins of sausage perfectly stippled with fat. That's because at Maiden Lane—its redbrick walls lined with tins of scallops, octopus, squid, mackerel, mussels, and sardines—much of the seafood comes from a can, sourced from small, mostly family-owned canneries across Europe.

In America, canned seafood is considered (if it's considered at all) an object of suspicion and mockery: the dregs of the deep, as it were. But in Europe, says Nialls Fallon, an owner of the year-old restaurant, "it's the best fish that goes into a can." Indeed, in countries with long seafaring and fishing traditions—Portugal, Spain, France, Iceland, Sweden—canned fish and shellfish are a pleasure of everyday life, something to be enjoyed with tapas or relished on a slab of black bread or with a glass of wine. And yet, Fallon points out, America (which has a storied seafaring past as well) once had its

own robust tinned-fish industry, one that's diminished since the 1920s.

While Fallon and his partner, Gareth Maccubbin, can't change history, they *are* making it their mission to reintroduce these foods to New Yorkers' culinary vocabulary. Here, they pay tribute to four seafood-loving cultures by composing four perfect meals pairing fish with cheese, wine, and condiments either from or inspired by their country of origin. Not only are they beautiful to look at but they're a reminder that sometimes—in food as in so much else—the old ways are still the most satisfying.



**From top:** Sardines in olive oil, mussels in *escabèche* (an acidic marinade), and octopus in olive oil, all from Spain.



#### SPAIN

"We have a tin of cockles on our menu that's \$35," says Maccubbin. "But they're hand-harvested and -packed, the way the Spanish have done it for years. It's worth the price." **Clockwise from top:** Oloroso sherry from Gutierrez Colosia, baby mackerel in olive oil, razor clams in brine, mussels in escabèche, squid in their own ink, sardines in olive oil, cockles in brine, octopus in olive oil, and scallops in a mix of paprika, olive oil, and vinegar.



#### UNITED STATES

“Maiden Lane is a street in downtown Manhattan,” says Fallon. “During the eighteenth century, when the Dutch had a settlement there, it was the site of the city’s first public market. We wanted to pay tribute to New York’s reputation as a hub for goods and people from all over.” **Clockwise from top right:** Beer from the Maine Beer Company, smoked trout, smoked arctic char, Long Island mussels smoked in-house, salmon roe with crème fraîche, smoked kielbasa, and locally made pickles.



#### FRANCE

“The French take their tinned sardines so seriously that there are even vintages of them, as with Champagne,” says Fallon. “We carry tins, for example, from 2008.” **Clockwise from top left:** Sardines in oil, Domaine Marillet Pinot Noir from Burgundy, *pain d’Avignon* with house-made duck confit, salami, a wedge of Délice de Bourgogne (a triple-cream cow’s milk cheese from Burgundy), and butter from Vermont Creamery.

→ For a list of our favorite canned seafoods and where you can order them (and the wines to pair them with), visit [cntraveler.com/food](http://cntraveler.com/food).



#### PORTUGAL

"Portugal in particular has a lot of great small canneries," says Fallon. **Clockwise from top right:** A glass of *vinho verde*; olives; pickled peppers, radishes, olives, and onions; salt cod tossed with *fideo* noodles and topped with aioli; sardines in *escabèche*; and house-made cod roe, which is salt-cured and then smoked.

**Maiden Lane** 162 Avenue B, New York City; 646-755-8911; themaidenlane.com; plates from \$15.