



FOOD & WINE

Jess Murphy's
ASPARAGUS
GALETTE

South Africa's
NEW WINE
PIONEERS

Ten years of
METALMAN

READY
to SERVE

Five star picnics,
food trucks and
more: Ireland's chefs
and restaurateurs
are primed for an
outdoor summer



Let's go OUTSIDE

From picnic baskets and food trucks, to pedestrianised streets and covered terraces, **Aoife Carrigy** rounds up the best of this summer's outdoor eating options

Ah, the Irish summer. You wouldn't know what you'd be getting. It'd be a great little country if we could put a roof on it. When the sun shines, there's nowhere else we'd rather be.

Clichés yes, but hard to deny too. And judging by the range of options being put together by the country's hospitality businesses in advance of it, summer 2021 is going to be a special one when it comes to eating outdoors.

City streets are being pedestrianised – thank you Cork – and European-style plazas imagined. Food trucks are staking out prime spots, and brunch boxes are jostling for attention alongside afternoon teas to go.

Picnic menus are popping up all over the place, some with the goodies delivered in tote bags for footloose days, others in luxury baskets complete with concierge service and walled garden settings.

The goalposts have shifted so often this last year that it's hard to say how the summer will pan out for indoor dining. For now, outdoor eating is the future, and longer term it could prove to be a source of much-needed extra business, with the World Economic Forum suggesting that the pandemic could "usher in a new era of socialising outdoors".

Hospitality businesses have been investing in their outdoor spaces and in umbrellas, awnings, pergolas and stretch tents, as well as permanent or partial rooftops on outdoor rooms and secret gardens.

Whatever happens this summer with the weather and the restrictions, and wherever in the country you spend it, there's a new outdoor food offering waiting to be discovered.

So check your forecast apps, pack your rain gear and sunscreen, hope for the best and laugh through the worst. Sure it's only a bit of weather. Here are the top ten outdoor eating trends for 2021.



Clara and Gerry O'Halloran of Flaggy Shore Oysters

1. ONE-STOP SHOPS

Swanky hotels and earthy campsites alike are developing multiple outdoor offers so that holidaymakers need never leave – and non-residents can enjoy the benefits too.

The Cliff at Lyons in Kildare (cliffatlyons.com) has an extensive range of outdoor options, from picnics among the orchards, to waterfall-side dining at chef Sean Smith's new Mill Restaurant, to Aimsir's two Michelin-star fare served up on the terrace.

Then there's its sister property, the Cliff House in Ardmore, Co Waterford, with its terrace views plus a sleek airstream van, The Pantry at Cliff, for walkers to grab lobster rolls or custard tarts to go.

More of this please: the FHB Foodtruck at the Amber Springs hotel in Gorey for Black Angus beef farmhouse burgers direct from their own farm (ambersprings.ie); Fadó Pizza (@fadopizza) at Clifden Campsite for pizza fresh from the wood-fired oven; the Celtic Ross Artisanal Food Truck (CRAFT) in Rosscarbery, west Cork for local meet global eats (celticrosshotel.com).

2. EAT THAT VIEW

Ciara and Gerry O'Halloran, the daughter and dad team behind Flaggy Shore Oysters in Co Clare, will give you the warmest of welcomes at their coastal HQ in New Quay.

You'll get a quick talk on oysters and be given a shucking masterclass before heading down to the spectacular limestone Flaggy Shore with a dozen



*"Whatever happens this summer
with the weather
and the restrictions, and
wherever in the country you
spend it, there's a new
outdoor food offering waiting
to be discovered"*



Chef Sean Smith's new Mill Restaurant is just one of the outdoor dining options at Cliff at Lyons in Kildare.
Photo: Barry Cronin



The River Club at The River Lee Hotel, Co Cork



The Nóin bar at The Twelve Hotel

dainties (the O'Halloran's signature small and sweet oysters), lemon, Tabasco and an oyster knife to shuck to your heart's content.

€25 per person by appointment from mid-June, look for Go Shuck Yourself at flaggysoreoysters.ie.

More of this please: Brave the queue at the wildly popular Misunderstood Heron food truck for Killary Fjord mussels or local hill lamb, (misunderstoodheron.com).

3. PICNICS TO GO

Coveting those dinky Flying Elephant picnic tables? Rent one from 64 Wines in Glasthule, Co Dublin complete with a gourmet picnic basket full of homemade charcuterie and snacks, inventive salads, spreads, bread and desserts, all packed with reusable glassware, cutlery and coolers.



Gerard, Anthony and the team can advise on the perfect wine pairing too. From €49 for two to share (excluding wine) plus €100 refundable deposit, 64wine.ie.

More of this please: The Doolin Inn artisan picnic (€22.50 per person) comes with a returnable rucksack, fleece blanket and flask (doolininn.ie). Urban Brewing's grazing picnic bag is for wherever the day takes you; it's €27 for two plus optional sangria, wine, cocktails or beers. Click and order at antidoteofflicence.ie or urbanbrewing.ie, and collect at the IFSC in Dublin.

4. COME PICNIC WITH US

Luxury estates and country house hotels are making the most of their woods and walled gardens, riverbanks and canalside walks by inviting non-residents to stroll along them and enjoy a picnic.

At west Limerick's family-run Springfield Castle, you can pick up a picnic from the Green Room Cafe to enjoy within 200 acres of wooded grounds. Later this summer expect outdoor brunch, afternoon tea and Friday evening socials with DJs, food and drinks – all delivered with Springfield's disarming charm. See springfieldcastle.com.

More of this please: Think Ballynahinch Castle's walled garden (ballynahinch-castle.com), the K Club's magical woods (kclub.ie) or Mount Juliet's rolling estate (mountjuliet.ie).

5. THE HOTTEST TERRACES

Of all this summer's freshly-buffed terraces, the prize for best dressed will probably go to The River Club at the River Lee hotel in Cork (theriverclubcork.ie) once its meadow theme decor is fully installed. Add clued-in bar service, locally sourced produce and riverside views from this heated terrace and it tallies up to fine times.

Meanwhile, the Brennan brothers have been busy. The Park Kenmare's extended terrace (parkkenmare.com), The Boathouse Bistro (dromquinnamanoor.com) and the newly-acquired The Lansdowne (lansdownekenmare.com) will be abuzz this summer, so get booking.

More of this please: Dublin city's Suesey Street (sueseystreet.ie) and Las Tapas de Lola (lastapasdelola.com) for cosy covered terraces; Hartley's in Dún Laoghaire (hartleys.ie) for solid cooking, warm smiles and harbour views; The Twelve Barna's sheltered Nóin for bar bites and clever cocktails (thetwelvehotel.ie).



Mount Juliet Estate, Co Kilkenny

6. ESCAPE IN THE CITY

Every city needs a great escape. Waterford's is extra special thanks to the inspiring team at GIY's GROW HQ, which now boasts a food truck and café terrace overlooking the vegetable gardens at the heart of the place. Though much of the food travels just 112 steps from plot to plate, everything else as impeccably sourced as it is imaginatively handled. (GIY.ie)

More of this please: Dublin has Overends Kitchen at Airfield Estate (airfield.ie), Cork has the Good Day Deli (goodaydeli.ie) and the Crawford Garden Café (crawfordgallerycafe.com).

7. MEET YOU IN THE CITY

Princes Street led the way on outdoor eating last year, and this year the Eat on the Street campaign will see 17 Cork city centre streets being closed to traffic in 2021 – either fully, as at the Marina, or from mid-morning to past midnight as at Caroline Street, where every business contains a restaurant such as Idaho Café (idaho.ie). Dublin is primed to follow suit, with pedestrianising the likes of Capel Street and Merrion Row up for debate.



Terrace dining at Ballynahinch

More of this please: Sullivan's Taproom in Kilkenny city has installed cheerful wooden huts for all-weather outdoor feeds of wood-fired pizzas with beer-inspired toppings like red ale pulled pork, chipotle sauce, golden ale onions and chorizo (sullivanstaproom.com).

8. CATCH 'EM WHERE YOU CAN

Chef Caitlin Ruth built a fanbase at Deasy's Harbour Bar and proved her street food cred at Electric Picnic's Theatre of Food before becoming a West Cork food truck highlight of 2020.

She popped up at Dunworley Beach and later at Levis' Corner House in Ballydehob, collaborating with local growers to serve vibrant veg-led fare. Catch her back at Dunworley this May or follow her on Instagram ([@caitlinruthfood](https://www.instagram.com/caitlinruthfood)) to see where she'll pop up next.

More of this please: Follow [@juliaslobstertruck](https://www.instagram.com/juliaslobstertruck) to sample this festival favourite at the likes of Bell Harbour or Liscannor's Moher Cottage in Clare, with some glorious views to boot.

9. PULL UP TO THE BUMPER

Murt's at The Boatyard exemplifies what can happen when good food, music and community spirit are brought together. Headed by chef Eoin Murtagh, Murt's serves street food all day, from Waterford blaa breakfast baps to lunchtime feasts like red ale braised barbecue beef brisket in brioche with all the trimmings.

Watch this space at Arklow's South Quay as it blossoms into a family-friendly outdoor dining destination. See [facebook.com/murtsfamilyfoodmusic](https://www.facebook.com/murtsfamilyfoodmusic).

More of this please: Catch the Feed food truck from Eoin Garry, a former head chef instructor at Cooks Academy, at Whelehan's Wines in Loughlinstown (whelehanswines.ie) at their weekly food market on Friday. Also there are Vera Foods for superb Spanish charcuterie and Kilkenny's celebrated Arán bakery. A new Saturday street food market offers even more options.



GROW HQ, Co Waterford

10. ROAD TRIP-WORTHY PUBS

There's something in the Donegal air around Carrickart and nearby Downings which is attracting some serious culinary talent. Ciaran Sweeney, previously of Forest & Marcy in Dublin, has taken over the kitchen at The Olde Glen Bar, one of the most picture-perfect country pubs in the land.

His hope is to be operational from June serving spit roast and barbecued fare on – you guessed it – fermented potato bread with sauces and sides. Until then, Bia Box from Aengus Haughey, the pub's proprietor, will keep you well fed. See oldeglen.ie.

More of this please: Coyne's of Kilkieran in Connemara is a personal favourite, while Rafterys of Craughwell is on my list. **FW**

All dates are subject to change and to government regulations.