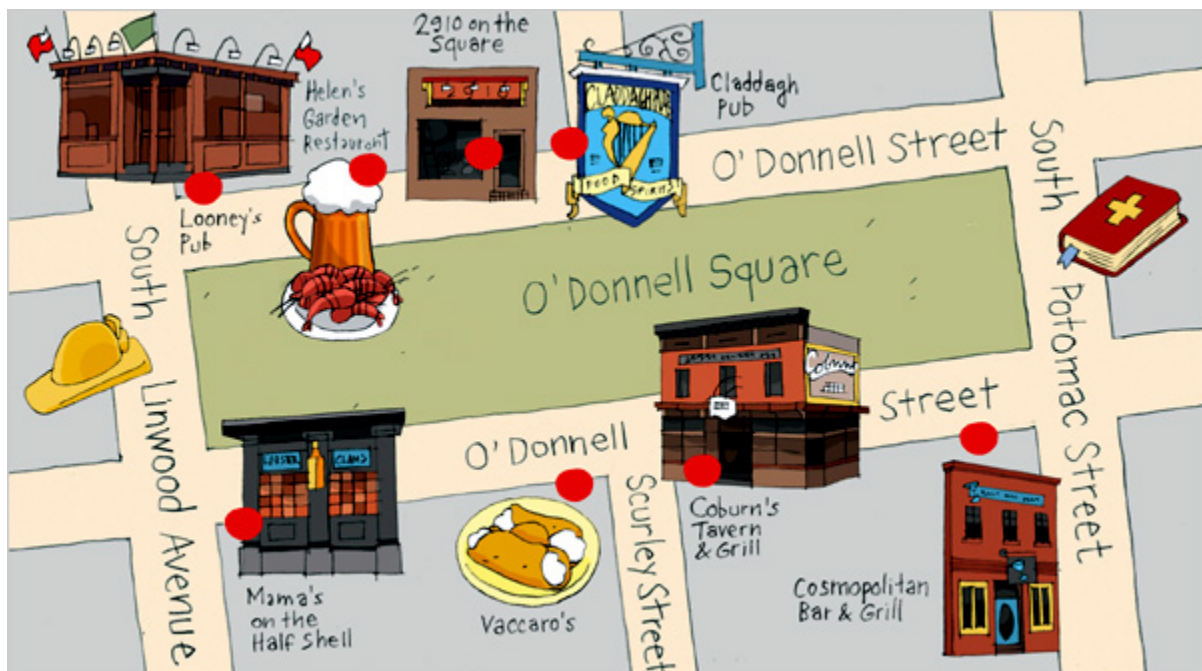


DAY OUT | BALTIMORE

Cold Yuengling, Fresh Oysters



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THEY certainly don't can anything anymore in Canton.

For almost a century, the [Baltimore](#) waterfront neighborhood nestled between Interstate 95 and Fells Point in this city's southeast corner was the center of the area's industrial sector, boasting more than a dozen canneries, a Navy yard and a bunch of factories owned by the old Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Almost all that activity faded away decades ago.

In the last seven years, however, local urban improvement grants have helped transform former factories and row houses into modern and spacious condos, with a slew of new homeowners moving in to join people who started remaking the area in the 1980s. What was derelict is now one of the city's most desirable neighborhoods, with water taxi service connecting it with the hotels and shops of the Inner Harbor (www.thewatertaxi.com).

Today, Canton revolves around a four-block green space called [O'Donnell Square](#). Named after Capt. John O'Donnell, who founded Canton as a plantation in the late 1700s, the square is a manicured grassy knoll where locals walk their dogs, play Frisbee and bask in the sun.

The park is bounded by a stone Evangelical Lutheran Church to the east and an old firehouse to the west. It splits traffic on O'Donnell Street and is, essentially, a glorified median. In between, raucous bars, inventive restaurants and tiny independent boutiques line either side, giving the spot the feeling of a college quad.

As if everyone were still in college, most lazy days in O'Donnell Square begin at a bar. Ravens and Orioles fans hang out at **Looney's Pub** (2900 O'Donnell Street, 410-675-9235), which boasts 50 televisions and 24 beers on tap. The vibe is equally sport-focused at **Claddagh Pub** (2918 O'Donnell Street, 410-522-4220), where the venerable [Pennsylvania](#) beer Yuengling is \$3.50 a pint, and mashers (a.k.a. mashed potatoes) come with every entree.

Other bars pride themselves on night life. At **Coburn's Tavern & Grill** (2921 O'Donnell Street, 410-342-0999), fancy drink specials and live D.J.'s keep crowds shoulder-to-shoulder well beyond midnight on Thursday through Saturday nights. Dancing also can be found at the **Cosmopolitan Bar & Grill** (2933 O'Donnell Street, 410-563-5000), which has a menu of 72 martinis, including butterscotch and key lime.

There are different kinds of bars, too. At [Mama's on the Half Shell](#) (2901 O'Donnell Street, 410-276-3160), for instance, the focus is oysters. Fried oysters, oysters Rockefeller and oyster shooters all make for delicious appetizers. Another highlight is Mama's oyster stew, which sells for \$6.99 a bowl and is made with Blue Point oysters the size of harmonicas.

For finer dining, try [Helen's Garden Restaurant](#) (2908 O'Donnell Street, 410-276-2233). The owners Ed Scherer and Tom Looney offer a Mediterranean-themed menu with items like shrimp sautéed with ouzo (\$19.95) and brined lamb with honey (\$24.95). Weekly specials include half-price entrees on Wednesdays and \$14 bottles of wine on Thursdays, a promotion for which locals have been known to wait hours.

After dinner, wander across the square to [Vaccaro's](#) (2919 O'Donnell Street, 410-276-4744) to be tempted by Italian pastries. The Canton outpost of a Baltimore chain, the shop offers traditional deserts like cannoli and sfogliatelle (each \$4.75), but Vaccaro's signature dish is a nacho-style platter of cannoli chips and cannoli cream dip for \$11.75.

Of the few shops on O'Donnell Square, the most eclectic is called [2910 on the Square](#) (2910 O'Donnell Street, 410-675-8505). It specializes in Judaica, including menorahs, dreidels and Seder plates, but the owner, Stephanie Fleishman, also sells Baltimore-specific knickknacks, including bricks painted to look like local row houses (prices start at \$25).