Top Essex places to eat

Le Talbooth

Located in the heart of Constable Country, this family run, award winning restaurant offers cuisine that is a skilful mixture of the classic and exciting. Le Talbooth at Dedham has been run by the Milsom family since 1952 and has always enjoyed a fine reputation for a warm welcome and the quality of food and wine. The restaurant enjoys a strong local following with a range of competitively priced menus.

Website: www.milsomhotels.com

The Sun Inn

The Sun Inn Dedham is an award winning, quintessential coaching inn at the heart of Contestable Country, perfect for exploring the Dedham Vale. A refuge that is easy to get to but hard to leave, it's an ideal spot to revive yourself be it with a pint of local beer or a meal using fine East Anglian produce. You'll be looked after by a well-established team of professional individuals while indulging in food influenced by seasons, locally sourced, convivially served with craft beer, stout and cider, eclectic wine, games and natter.

Website: www.thesuninndedham.com

The Pier at Harwich

The Pier at Harwich offers two superb restaurants, each very different in style and atmosphere, giving guests plenty of choice. The Harbourside on the first floor has stunning views over the Stour and Orwell estuaries - a perfect place to enjoy a glass or two of champagne and half a dozen oysters. The restaurant specialises in locally caught seafood, and it couldn't be fresher as much of the fish is landed in the harbour opposite. On the ground floor, the Ha'Penny Restaurant has a relaxed ambience and the food is brasserie style - the fish and chips are famous!

Website: www.milsomhotels.com
Alec’s Restaurant

Whether it be enjoying the surrounding Navestock Side countryside, or watching the cricketers on the green opposite, its location is superb. Alec’s Restaurant Bar and Grill sets out to provide simple, quality food cooked the way you wish. Head chef Stephen Li brings his knowledge and expertise from the most superb kitchen area. Classic fried cod in beer batter and chips sits happily with steamed sea bass with an oriental twist. Website: www.alecsrestaurant.com

The Cricketers at Clavering

This 16th century English country pub boasts quaint rustic charm in abundance with a locally sourced menu oozing with flavour. The entire menu is expertly prepared on the premises by a team of creative and talented chefs who are passionate about using excellent produce. Owners Trevor and Sally make fresh bread for their guests every day and their son, Jamie Oliver, supplies the wonderful seasonal vegetables, herbs and leaves from his certified organic garden nearby. Website: www.thecricketers.co.uk

The Company Shed at Mersea Island

The Company Shed has gained a reputation among locals and tourists alike as being the best restaurant for fresh seafood. The concept is simple, bring your own bread and drink and enjoy lunch consisting of seafood platters, seared scallops, grilled tiger prawns and grilled mussels. Homemade fish pâtés, locally smoked salmon, freshly cooked crabs and lobsters and a wide variety of other seafood is available. Various specials are served, depending on what local fish has been caught. Website: www.the-company-shed.co.uk
The Pheasant, Gestingthorpe

A warm welcome awaits you at this AA Pub of the Year for England 2014/15. Owners Diana and James serve only freshly prepared, locally sourced regional food every day of the week. With a location set in the middle of rural countryside between Castle Hedingham and Sudbury, The Pheasant is the perfect stop off during a long country walk. Enjoy your food in the garden during the summer, or take your spot by wood burning stoves in the winter for a real taste of cosy, countryside bliss.

Website: [www.thepheasant.net](http://www.thepheasant.net)

The Red Cow at Chrishall

An idyllic English thatched country pub in the rural village of Chrishall to the west of Saffron Walden, The Red Cow is the perfect place to escape to the country. Whether it is for a simple bar meal or a more formal a la carte meal in the 32 cover restaurant, Toby and Alexis guarantee a warm welcome. Freshly prepared by owner/chef Toby, all items on the menu are prepared from carefully sourced ingredients on a daily basis. Website: [www.theredcow.com](http://www.theredcow.com)

Tudors at Marygreen Manor Hotel

A fine example of early 16th century architecture, steeped in historic charm, this tudor manor house was initially the home of Henry Roper, gentleman servant to Catherine of Aragon. The Tudors Restaurant is set in The Baronial Hall of Marygreen Manor. It offers international cuisine and provides guests with stunning A la Carte and fixed price menus, complimented by the award winning wine list.

Website: [www.marygreenmanor.co.uk](http://www.marygreenmanor.co.uk)
The Eight Bells at Saffron Walden

The new award-winning team has introduced a wonderful seasonal menu and a fresh look inside the pub - all adding up to a great experience, every time you visit. You'll enjoy a warm welcome and plenty of comfy spots to sit and enjoy a pint of real ale or a glass of wine. Also available is the 'Drawing Room,' which is a lovely intimate space tucked away behind heavy velvet curtains - a perfect setting for cocktail parties or a private dinner for up to 12 people. The Eight Bells is a proper pub where you'll feel just as at home whether you pop in for a drink or stay a little longer and have a bite to eat.

Website: [www.8bells-pub.co.uk](http://www.8bells-pub.co.uk)

The Oyster Smack Inn at Burnham-on-Crouch

The Oyster Smack Inn is a charming local pub and restaurant. Built in the 1800's, the building is full of character and sets the scene for an outstanding and extremely popular local inn. The coastal location means that The Oyster Smack Inn can take full advantage of the freshest of seafood and its menu utilises this to full effect. The team in the kitchen are passionate about using the finest produce from local suppliers.

Website: [www.theoystersmackinn.co.uk](http://www.theoystersmackinn.co.uk)

The Compasses at Pattiswick

This is truly a destination pub, the perfect rural retreat for those seeking good food and good company in stunning surroundings. Seemingly miles from any populated areas, the Compasses at Pattiswick is only 20 minutes from both Chelmsford and Colchester. The kitchen crew are passionate about using the finest produce from local suppliers including skate from the Little Fish Company in Wivenhoe. Whether you are simply passing through and in need of a pub lunch or planning a special night out with friends and family, the Compasses at Pattiswick is a great choice.

Website: [www.thegreatpubcompany.co.uk/thecompasses](http://www.thegreatpubcompany.co.uk/thecompasses)
Le Bouchon Brasserie

Le Bouchon is regarded as one of Essex's best restaurants, offering guests the opportunity to dine in elegant surroundings, with the biggest selection of half-bottles of wine available. Expect to find exquisite dishes like escargots, coquilles Saint Jacques, beef Wellington and veal on the menu. The cocktail bar offers a choice of sixty cocktails, each one prepared fresh to order. Winner of the Best Newcomer Restaurant category of the 2014 Essex Tourism & Hospitality Awards.

Website: [www.le-bouchon.co.uk](http://www.le-bouchon.co.uk)

The Blue Strawberry

The restaurant has built its enviable reputation over the last 20 years offering quality food and service. The entrance opens into a grand Victorian style conservatory which houses the reception and bar with its leather sofa and chairs. Inside the restaurant itself the overwhelming impression is of stepping back in time, old etchings and prints on the walls, antique books and ornaments, beams, open fires and subdued lighting.

Website: [www.bluestrawberrybistrot.co.uk](http://www.bluestrawberrybistrot.co.uk)

The Peldon Rose

If you appreciate fine modern dining, traditional service and the ambience of historic surroundings, then you will love The Peldon Rose – the famous Essex coaching inn that has stood majestically at the approach to Mersea Island since the early 15th century. Great food is at the heart of the menu, whether it's to enjoy the delicious simplicity of the Mersea Island oysters, local fish, meat or savour an array of modern English & continental dishes.

Website: [www.thepeldonrose.com](http://www.thepeldonrose.com)
Ananta Thai Food

Owners, Sergio and Ananta Manini have created a welcoming fusion of cultures in which to enjoy Thai dining in a cosy environment in the picturesque Coach and Horses pub. Originally from Bangkok, Ananta’s delicious dishes are all freshly cooked to order. Four main regions in Thailand contribute to the Thai cuisine: Northern, North-eastern, Central and Southern, and each region emphasizes the flavour with distinctive ingredients. Customers can choose from a varied menu of authentic Thai starters, soups, curries, stir fries, rice and noodle dishes providing fantastic flavours for your culinary senses. Website: www.anantathaifood.com

The Coast Inn, Mersea Island

With views that are sure to bring out the romantic in you, and a menu that will leave your taste buds leaping into life, The Coast Inn is just the place for lengthy lunches and epic evening meals. Home cooked meals have a distinct marine theme – unsurprising considering the proximity of plentiful coastal waters – and the fish and chips have often been declared Mersea Island’s best. A ‘Today’s special’ board has dishes depending on the daily catch. Steaks, duck or lamb dishes are also served seven days a week. Website: www.thecoastinn.co.uk

The Mistley Thorn

The Mistley Thorn is located in the centre of the historic coastal village of Mistley. Built as a coaching inn circa 1723, The Mistley Thorn offers award-winning dining in tastefully designed surroundings opposite the River Stour. American born executive chef Sherri Singleton has developed a menu using the best of the area’s seasonal produce. Seafood is a specialty, with Mersea oysters available year-round and Colchester natives, when in season. Fresh, as in with-a-glint-still-in-its-eye, seafood is locally landed or sourced from Ben’s Fish in Mersea Island. Website: http://www.mistleythorn.co.uk