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Cheap Eats: Towpath Cafe in Fairport

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The lobster cake salad at Towpath Cafe in Fairport. / KAREN MILTNER

Written by **Karen Miltner**
Staff writer

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room. Live music venue. Neighborhood watering hole.

Towpath Cafe is hard to pin down because it juggles a lot of roles and personalities, depending on the time of day you arrive and which section you sit in. Sandwiches and wraps anchor the main menu (with specialty salads and pizzas on the fringe), with daily hot breakfasts and dinner specials four days a week dispensing surprises here and there, from a breakfast fruit pizza with raspberry



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mascarpone to Friday fish fry.

Wrapped around the south end of Fairport's Box Factory building, Towpath expanded from a coffee house with sandwiches and soups to a full-service restaurant taking over an adjacent restaurant space where other food service businesses (including Whatchagotcookin' and Katrina's Mediterranean) failed.

The new configuration has a few more stairs to climb and turns to take, and now includes a covered patio overlooking the Erie Canal path and an intermezzo semi-formal dining room that connects that patio to the main coffee house where [leather couches](#), armchairs, tables and coffee counter provide a community room setting. At least two parties were holding work meetings, and another was playing a board game in that cozy lower-level cafe.

I started my lunch out on that shady, waterfront patio watching hordes of people passing from Lickety Splits (the ice cream shop next door) to the canal path. But high winds and goosebumps sent me inside before my chicken tortilla soup arrived. The tomato-based soup (\$4 cup, \$6 bowl) with

white meat, cheese and tortilla chip garnish was ordered as way to get warm on a surprisingly cool August afternoon, but didn't quite do the trick as it was not that warm itself.

The lobster cake salad (\$11.50) more happily met my expectations. Two lightly fried burger-sized cakes with a strong mixed-herb theme and assertive roasted red pepper sauce drizzled on top sat on a humble mixed greens bed with cucumbers, onions and tomatoes. I took half of it home.

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