

Where to Go in Maine



Wherein we share some of what we love
about our state

<https://www.maintourism.com/sp/MIY2025/>(for
the legit Maine Tourism Association version)

Please come and spend extra time with your
family and loved ones before or after you
gather with our SLR family. Here are some
ideas that would make a memorable trip and
ways to have an authentic Maine experience.

Questions? Just ask Charlie or Kathy

Charles.soltan@soltanbass.com,

kgillisoltan@gmail.com

Acadia National Park

Flights into Bangor International Airport afford you the chance to have a short one hour drive to visit Acadia National Park, one of the crown jewels of Maine and the US National Park system. The drive from Bar Harbor to Portland is three hours. Acadia can be found on Mt. Desert Island. This amazing island (accessible by car via causeway) offers scenic drives, granite peaks, hiking trails from very strenuous to strolling pathways, biking carriage trails, amazing mountain and ocean vistas and many boating opportunities. The town of Bar Harbor is bustling with many shops and restaurants. If you do drive from Bangor take a few minutes to drive by Steven King's house in Bangor (bats and dragons adorn his wrought iron fence) or to see Paul Bunyan (31 feet tall) on Main Street!

Hotels:

On the island, there are three villages worth considering for hotels: Bar Harbor, Northeast Harbor, Southwest Harbor. Many affordable hotels are in Bar Harbor. There are, of course good Air BNB options as well.

Bar Harbor is the largest village with lots of restaurants, hotels, and shops. We often stay here even though we spend a lot of time on "The Quiet Side", the western side. The island is like a pair of lungs. The east side has Bar Harbor and a large part of Acadia Nat'l Park and the west lung has Southwest Harbor and more of Acadia.

Bar Harbor hotels: The Atlantic Oceanside is where we stay most often; every room looks out over the ocean. We prefer the Atlantic View building here because the balconies are great. Perfect way to relax after a day of hiking. We have also stayed at the Bar Harbor Grand Hotel (right on the main drag in Bar Harbor but no view) and the Harborside. The Bar Harbor Inn and Spa is also lovely. Many boutique inns abound!

Southwest Harbor inns: We used to stay at the Claremont but it was remodeled and is now quite expensive! It still has the classic old inn vibe. We have enjoyed the

Lindenwood Inn and have tried to stay at the Harbour Cottage Inn but haven't had any luck getting our reservations in time.

Northeast Harbor inns: We don't have any firsthand knowledge of inns here but in May you may find a good price. The Asticou will reopen in May after a massive renovation, so it will be an option. Check TripAdvisor reviews before you book. Here is a list of things to consider doing on Mt. Desert Island:

Eat lobster! We recommend **Beal's** in Southwest Harbor, **Thurston's Lobster Pound** in Bernard or **Abel's** in Mount Desert



Bike on the carriage trails: rentals available in Bar Harbor. This is a great way to see the park! There are 45 miles of trails built by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and his family between 1913 and 1940

Hike! Our favorites:

- Wonderland Trail (easy stroll to stunning shoreline, perfect with little ones), Acadia Trail (moderate hike with AMAZING views, good family hike)
- Flying Mountain Trail (easier than Acadia but still Amazing views, good family hike)
- Dorr Mountain (strenuous, sheer granite face; fantastic views of Cadillac Mountain)
- Beech Cliff Trail (strenuous with iron ladders, not a trail for anyone with fear of heights)
- The Bubbles Trail (moderate, one of the most popular in the park)
- Jordan Pond Trail (easy and fun trail around Jordan Pond. Perfect for little ones. Stop at The Jordan Pond House afterward for popovers and lemonade! Not sure if reservations are required for the Jordan Pond House)
- Great Head Trail (easy, great for family. Overlooks Sand Beach and open ocean)
- Jessup Path (easy, 1.5 miles through boggy, white birch forest; close to town in Bar Harbor)
- Homans Path (.3 mile steep (one way) path up intricate rock work with tight passages, often used to connect to Schiff path up Door Mountain to the summit.
- Little Long Pond carriage trail to Jordan Pond House, (2 mile walk on very even carriage trail with a bit of an elevation gain.)

Kayak, Paddle board: Rental shops can be found in several towns on Mount Desert Island

Explore the cobble beaches: Little Hunter Beach, Compass Harbor trail, Hunter Beach

[Get out on the water:](#) Whale Watch, Puffin Lighthouse Cruises, Beal and Bunker Mailboat cruise, Deep Sea Fishing, Sunset Sails Most leave from Bar Harbor but some leave out of Northeast Harbor.

[Drive to the top of Cadillac Mountain](#) (Reservations required May 21 through Oct. 26) Some try to catch the USA's first rays of sunlight by being atop Cadillac for sunrise. Sunset is another popular time. Breathtaking vistas abound! One can opt to climb up one of the mountain's trails as well!

[Visit the Gardens:](#) [All stunningly beautiful and meditative.](#)

[Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Gardens](#), Seal Harbor; stunning formal gardens with interesting sculpture, reservations required.

[Asticou Azalea Gardens](#), Northeast Harbor; Japanese-style gardens, no reservations required, while free, a \$5 per person donation is requested.

[Thuja Gardens](#), Northeast Harbor; walking distance to Asticou, same fee structure.

[Restaurants:](#)

Aside from the lobster pounds listed above, there is some fantastic fine dining available on Mount Desert Island. Here are a few of our favorites:

[Havana](#), Bar Harbor, the winner of Wine Spectator Best of Award of Excellence from 2011 to 2024, The Obama family dined here when they were vacationing in Bar Harbor

[Havana Perilla](#), Bar Harbor, the outdoor tapas bar and grill at Havana

[Reading Room Restaurant](#), Bar Harbor Inn and Spa, Bar Harbor

[Jordan Pond House](#), Seal Harbor

[Red Sky Restaurant](#), Southwest Harbor

[Little Fern Restaurant](#), Claremont Hotel, Southwest Harbor

Some less formal places include:

[Harbor Table](#), Southwest Harbor

[Peter Trout's Tavern](#), Manset

[Two Cats](#), Cottage Street, Bar Harbor the best for breakfast or lunch, not open for dinner.)

[Discover Hidden Gems:](#) Here are a few of our well-kept secrets (shhh, don't tell just anyone!!)

[Schoodic National Scenic Byway:](#) On this unspoiled Maine coast, you'll find interesting little villages, great art and beautiful vistas as you drive through Hancock, Sullivan, Gouldsboro, Winter Harbor and Birch Harbor before you reach the Schoodic section of Acadia National Park. There are far less people here and you may find that you have wide open expanses of the shoreline completely to yourself. You can take the Bar Harbor Ferry to Winter Harbor, which is still 5.6 miles to the Acadia National Park Schoodic Point.

[Indian Point Blagden Preserve:](#) Found on the northwestern edge of Mt. Desert, this preserve offers serene hikes through pine and tamarack forests with 1000 feet of frontage on Western Bay. It is great place to bring a picnic to enjoy the rocky shore and perhaps spot some seals, as this is a favorite of theirs for sunning. Bring binoculars!

[Bar Harbor Inn \(upstairs\) Oasis Club Lounge:](#) outside on the balcony with wicker chairs; Gorgeous views and great cocktails. Perfect after a hike or for Happy Hour.

[Blue Hill peninsula:](#) One peninsula west of Mount Desert Island, one can find a whole host of fishing villages and real Maine treasures. E.B. White lived in Brooklin in an 18th century farmhouse that is now open for tours. The Wooden Boat School is here as well. Try [Tinder Hearth](#) for wood-fired pizza and [El El Frijoles taqueria](#). A half hour south brings you to Goose Cove and [Aragosta](#) with its ten-course tasting menu. This little paradise offers cute cottages that are all within walking distance of

the restaurant and the beach. Great kayaking area! Stonington gives you a chance to see a beautiful working harbor.

Midcoast Maine (all within 2.5 hours north of Portland)

The coastal towns from Belfast to Brunswick offer unique and interesting views of working fishing harbors, arts and culture and spectacular coastline. Here is a quick overview of some of these towns and villages.

Belfast: “Located at the mouth of the Passagassawakeag River and on Penobscot Bay, the charming town of Belfast has it all! Seafood and a hip brewery on a working waterfront, one of Maine’s best vegetarian restaurants, the iconic Belfast Co-op, the art-deco Colonial Theatre, art galleries, antiques, renowned book shops, the oldest shoe store in America and the largest, year-round Maine farmers’ market with 70+ vendors.” (from Main Street, Maine) We like **Chase’s Daily** restaurant.

Camden: Nestled into a coastal area where the mountains meet the sea, Camden offers a bustling waterfront and working harbor. Boutique shops and interesting restaurants have given Camden a high ranking on tourist’s must-do list. One can drive or hike up Mt. Battie for breathtaking views of the ocean and the town. Edna St. Vincent Millay grew up here and wrote about its beauty. There a great sailboat cruises offered from the harbor. Camden Hills State Park is great for hikes and viewing Maine’s rocky coastline. **Franny’s Bistro** is a wonderful intimate restaurant. **Long Grain** is a wonderful locavore Asian restaurant. **The Mariner Restaurant** offers new southern-comfort food, winning rave reviews.



Rockport: This small scenic harbor village offers some beautiful views and some very good restaurants. We love **18 Central Oyster Bar and Grill** and **Nina June**. The new Rockport Harbor Hotel, tucked between the two dining spots mentioned above, offers stunning views of beautiful Rockport Harbor in many rooms as well as from the rooftop bar.

Rockland: This fishing and lobster harbor is known for its art scene boasting the Farnsworth Museum which “offers a nationally recognized collection of works from many of America’s greatest artists. With more than 15,000 works in the collection, there is always something new on view at the Farnsworth. The museum has one of the nation’s largest collections of works by sculptor Louise Nevelson. The Museum has an extensive collection of Maine works by three generations of Wyeths—N.C., Andrew and Jamie—and in a unique partnership with the Wyeth Center for American Art and the Brandywine Museum, has access to more than 7,000 Wyeth works of art.” (Farnsworth Art Museum) There are many galleries mixed among the shops and restaurants on Rockland’s Main Street. We recommend [Sammy’s Deluxe](#), [In Good Company](#) and [Primo restaurant](#) (we think it’s Maine’s best!).

Nearby, the Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse, the Owl’s Head Lighthouse, and The Owl’s Head Air and Auto Museum (one of Charlie’s favorite spots) are each worth visiting. We recommend the 250 Main Hotel in Rockland. Stop at [McLoon’s Lobster Shack](#) before heading into Cushing.

The Olson House, in Cushing (made famous by Andrew Wyeth in his many paintings including Christina’s World) is open for touring. On site one can visit the graveyard where Andrew and Betsy Wyeth are buried.

Port Clyde is a favorite spot for Jamie Wyeth. Visit the Marshall Point Lighthouse here. Catch the Monhegan Boatline ferry to Monhegan Island, long considered one of the most beautiful of Maine’s 4,600 islands. Its light and vistas have inspired many artists like George Bellows, Robert Henri, Rockwell Kent and Jamie Wyeth. You can also get a ride out to Monhegan in New Harbor (Hardy Boat Cruises).

Monhegan Island: If you try to visit Monhegan in just a day, it will be packed. It is doable. Visit Cathedral Woods and the Fairy houses, Fish Beach and the galleries. Staying for the night is a joy.

Pemaquid peninsula and Damariscotta area: This peninsula is a great place to visit Pemaquid Point Lighthouse, a historic 1827 lighthouse with the surrounding rock formations that are hundreds of millions of years old.



One can also visit the historic site of Fort Charles built in 1677 which was replaced by Fort William Henry built in 1692. Fort Frederick was built by the British in on the ruins of Fort William Henry.

The Damariscotta area produces what we believe to be **the best oysters in the world**. Please check them out and let us know what you think! The cute town of Damariscotta offers many shops and restaurants. For the authentic shucking experience, we recommend **Glidden Point Oyster Farms** in Newcastle where you can shuck your own! We also recommend the **Shuck Station Raw Bar**, the **River House**, **Damariscotta River Grill** and **King Eider's Pub**. Tours of the oyster farms are available. Just outside of Damariscotta, you'll find Charlie's favorite rural farmhouse brewery, **Oxbow** in Newcastle.

In nearby Alna, **The Alna Store** has been listed on the New York Times 2024 list of the country's best restaurants. For good reason. This tiny place in a tiny town is a real gem. Great cocktails and an amazing menu.

Boothbay Harbor/Bath/Brunswick area: Boothbay Harbor is a popular destination for tourists and locals as well as the home to the Ami and James Bass clans. It is a little over an hour from Portland.

One can go sailing, enjoy strolling the boutique shops, or explore the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens with its 5 trails and unique trails. Rent kayaks or enjoy the Boothbay Harbor Sculpture Trail.

Bath has a rich maritime history and the Maritime Museum does not disappoint. There are enjoyable historic walking tours. Just south of Bath are two of Maine's beautiful sand beaches, Reid State Park and Popham State Park. Reid State Park offers clam digging workshops in the summer. One can book deep sea fishing in the area as well. Bath is 40 minutes north of Portland.

Brunswick is home to Bowdoin College, Joshua Chamberlain and Senator Angus King. Restaurants we enjoy here are **Enoteca Athena**, **555 North**, **Taverna Khione**, and **Bao Bao @Tao**. Brunswick is about 30 minutes north of Portland and can be reached by train from Portland though it takes longer than driving.

Central Maine

Augusta and Waterville: Augusta is home to the world famous, **Cushnoc Brewing Company** and, of course, the James Bass Family. Visit the Water Street restaurant for wood-fired pizza, **the Annex** on Route 3 or the **Cantina** in Waterville. Tell them James Bass sent you! The statehouse is an interesting place; see if Charlie Soltan will give you an exclusive tour. If you find yourself in Waterville, be sure to visit the Colby College Art Museum (a real gem). **Front and Main** offers a great happy hour where you can sit by the fire (inside or outside) and enjoy cocktails and snacks. This restaurant is also great for dinner.

Freedom: Home of **The Lost Kitchen**, a farm to table dining experience that is on every foodie's bucket list. While it is hard to get a reservation, (one must send a postcard with reservation requests to be drawn at random) it is not impossible. The first day of Spring 2025, The Lost Kitchen will announce how to request reservations. In the past, they begin filling the reservation books (only 40 diners each night) by pulling the postcards one by one. Then you are called to let you know that your card has been drawn. We were able to go because someone cancelled and The Lost Kitchen then drew our postcard. It is a memorable experience! That is really all there is to do there but it is a really beautiful setting at an old mill.

Freeport: Home to the L.L. Bean Flagship store, Freeport has many outlet shops and is only 20 minutes north of Portland (also accessible via train). L.L. Bean offers more than just merchandise; try one of their Outdoor Discovery Experiences including fly-casting, kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, shooting sports, bird watching and more. Just outside the village, one can find interesting coastal trails at Wolfneck State Park or Winslow Memorial Park. [Harraseeket Lobster Pound](#) is a must stop if you are in the area. It is picturesque and delicious! Charlie loves three breweries here: [Goodfire](#), [Mast Landing](#) and [Maine Brewing Company](#).

Bethel area: Maine's western mountains offer many fantastic hiking opportunities. Grafton Notch State Park offers waterfalls, hikes, caves and spectacular leaf-peeping! Also in this area is the Maine Mineral and Gem Museum with an amazing display of Maine gems and touchable moon and mars rocks. Sunday River offers gondola or open chair rides to the summit of North Peak for leaf-peeping.

Portland and environs:

Museums: Portland Art Museum and McClellan House, Maine Historical Society and Wadsworth-Longfellow House, Winslow Homer's Studio, Victoria Mansion and Portland Observatory.

Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad: museum and coastal rail rides

Portland Headlight: Maine's iconic lighthouse

Beaches: Two Lights State Park (Try [The Good Table](#) or [The Lobster Shack at Two Lights](#)), Ferry Beach, Higgins Beach

Get out on the water: Ferry rides from the Ferry terminal or ride the mail boat. Casco Bay Lines

Restaurants we recommend (keeping in mind that there are MANY great places!!!):

[Eventide Oyster Co.](#)

[Central Provisions](#)

[Scales](#)

[Street and Co.](#)

[Isa Bistro](#)

[Fore Street](#)

[Evo](#)

[Solo Italiano](#)

[Via Vecchia](#)

Some more casual Portland eateries:

[Duckfat](#)

[The Highroller Lobster Co.](#)

[Olive Café](#)

[Holy Donut \(potato doughnut shop\)](#)

Chebeague Island: This island is close to Portland but will feel another world away. Accessible by ferry from Portland via a 1-1/4 hour ferry trip, or from Cousins Island in Yarmouth by a fifteen minute ferry run. Generally, the Cousins Island route is preferred by most travelers. [The Chebeague Island Inn](#) is a beautiful 4-star place to stay and offers remarkable fine dining in its restaurant. Many go out to the island just for dinner.

Scarborough Marsh and Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve: The Scarborough Audubon Center offers trails, canoe tours, canoe and kayak rentals for the exploration of the salt marsh. The Wells Reserve at Laudholm Farms protects fields, forests, freshwater marsh, salt marsh and sandy beach in the densely populated Southern Maine coast. It offers many trails through fields, woods, marshes and beaches.

Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Kennebunk Beach: These are Southern Maine coastal villages that offer great opportunities to drive along the coast to see Walker's Point (summer home of the Bush Family), lobsterman at work and beautiful beaches. Check out the galleries and boutique shops. **Alison's Restaurant** is Kennebunkport tradition, a perfect place to get your clam chowder and lobster roll. Kennebunkport is also the home of Kenneth Roberts, leading 20th century historical writer. Goose Rocks Beach is a beautiful white sand paradise. There is a Franciscan Monastery here that has beautiful gardens to roam; it is open from sunrise to sunset. Across the street is a Kennebunk fixture: **The White Barn Inn**. A classic inn and restaurant, people have stayed and dined here for 50 years.

Ogunquit: Our favorite thing to do in Ogunquit is walk the 1.25 mile long Marginal Way, a cliff walk that offers perfect views of the ocean and Maine's rocky coast. There are also wonderful art galleries and boutique shops to explore. When here, visit Ogunquit Beach and Footbridge Beach as well as the Ogunquit Museum of American Art.

Cape Neddick: Home to the famous Amy and Patrick Paul clan. Cape Neddick is a great place to visit. Close by is Cliff House, a 4-star hotel right on the water. Check out the hiking and biking trails on Mt. Agamenticus. Cape Neddick Beach is great for exploring tide pools. Long Sands, Short Sands and York Harbor Beach area also enjoyable sand beaches that are close by.

There are so many other areas of the state that are phenomenal!

Mt. Katahdin stands a mile high and, though that seems to pale in comparison to the mountains of the west, consider that the climb starts at basically sea level. Reservations must be made to climb and to enter its home, Baxter State Park, which is about three hours north of Portland.

Washington County is home to the most easterly point of the United States. This is true Downeast Maine. Quoddy Head State Park (Kathy's favorite place on earth) is quintessential Maine with pine groves, cobble beaches and forests as far as you can see. There are large networks of trails in this area: Cobscook Shores, the Bold Coast and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust are a few that provide great hiking opportunities. Eastport is the most eastern city of the United States. It is a deep water commercial port on the Bay of Fundy, with the largest tide differential in the world. This is 4 ½ hours from Portland.

Maine's mountains offer wonderful hiking trails. Sugarloaf Mountain in Carrabassett Valley operates its lift to its summit in the fall for leaf peepers. Trails nearby follow the Carrabassett River or bring you to secluded waterfalls. Rangeley is an outdoors person's paradise: hiking, fishing, swimming, boating all on pristine lakes. Visit the Height of Land, Quill Hill, Smalls Falls

or hike a bit of the Appalachian Trail here. The Moosehead Lake region offers the same outdoor opportunities.



White Water Rafting: Commercial river rafting is offered on three rivers: the Dead, Kennebec and the Penobscot. We recommend the Kennebec.

Coos Canyon: This hidden gem is a great place to stretch your legs or have lunch. This scenic stop is a 500-yd. gorge that sits right next to the road. The gorge features rock crystals, potholes, hydraulic erosion features and 15-foot waterfall. Some people swim in the canyon and others pan for gold in the river. A small bridge leading to Coos Canyon Campground offers a fantastic view of this unique natural feature. Talk to the folks at the rock shop across the road if you are interested in trying your hand at gold-panning. (Info from Untamed Maine)

Lakeside stays: Maine is full of freshwater lakes that offer all the joys of water sports and great relaxation. Cottages, called camps here in Maine, are available for rent usually by the week. This could offer a home base while you take day trips throughout the state. Some lake regions include: Sebago, Winthrop/Belgrade/China, Rangely, and Moosehead. There are many choices in other areas as well!



Aurora Borealis

We have had some great Northern Lights sightings in the past year! These shots are from October 2024 at our house in East Winthrop.



