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BAR HARBOR, MOUNT DESERT ISLAND, AND ACADIA NATIONAL PARK





editor's note

We are passionate about travel and appreciate collected experiences. A new-to-you country, town, or landscape can introduce a fresh perspective and enhance your life in unexpected ways. At press time, the world was bonding over the safety of home versus the thrill of travel. Although travel is in a state of flux, there is always value in education. Whether this article serves as research for a future trip or provides a real-time adventure from the comfort of your own home, we hope it helps you experience a new destination.

OPENING SPREAD: The rugged coastline of Maine and the iconic Bass Harbor Head Light. BELOW: Quaint restaurants and boutiques on Main Street Bar Harbor, Mount Desert Island. OPPOSITE FROM LEFT: Lobster traps along Bar Harbor's Shore Path. Autumn color above Jordan Pond in Acadia National Park. Can you say *lobstah* roll? Yum!



From rugged coastlines and islands to countless hiking and biking trails, Maine is the New England treasure known as Vacationland. Without a doubt, the state's top destination and crowning jewel is Mount Desert Island and its town of Bar Harbor (pronounced Bah Hahbah). Known as the gateway to Acadia National Park and its 47,000 acres, Bar Harbor has long been a hotspot for summer escapes and fall foliage getaways.

Written by Heidi Siefkas



Before heading out for the park's mix of ocean, mountains, lakes, forest and rocky coastline, stroll along Bar Harbor's Shore Path, passing the Victorian cottages of the nineteenth-century elite. Then, it's time to fuel up at one of the charming sea-to-table restaurants. Indulge in fresh Maine lobster (pronounced lobstah) or clam chowder (pronounced chowdah) paired with a local craft brew.

PARK LOOP ROAD

The majority of Acadia's highlights are located on Park Loop Road, a twenty-seven-mile circular route beginning at Hulls Cove. Because the park receives over three million visitors a year, it is highly recommended to utilize the Island Explorer shuttles as parking is limited within the park.

A great first stop for photos and dipping your toes in the ocean is Sand Beach. Although you can swim at Sand Beach, the water is chilly, even in the summer months. From Sand Beach, the Ocean Path hugs the coast leading you to Thunder Hole. If the conditions are

right, you will hear the loud, storm-like clap of a wave before you see it. The path ends at the picturesque Otter Cliff where you are reminded of the power of nature as the waves crash against the granite cliff and boulders.

Off the road, there is still plenty to see. Thanks to John D. Rockefeller Jr., the park has forty-five miles of carriage trails ideal for bicycling. You can rent bicycles and gear at numerous rental shops in Bar Harbor. An ideal full-day itinerary would include riding from town to Acadia's Eagle Lake and continuing to Jordan Pond and the Bubbles. Stop for fresh out-of-the-oven popovers and tea at the Jordan Pond House.

CADILLAC MOUNTAIN

On everyone's Acadia bucket list is Cadillac Mountain. Standing at 1,530 feet, its summit is famous for being the first place in the continental United States that sees the sunrise. Getting to the top of Cadillac Mountain can be done two ways: by foot or vehicle. Regardless of the season and time of the sunrise, it will be chilly at the summit. Prepare for winds

and bundle up. If you aren't an early riser, the sunsets are notable too.

WILDLIFE

Along your Maine journey, you may encounter wildlife on land or at sea. You can spot humpbacks on a whale-watching adventure from Bar Harbor. If you're fortunate, you might witness a fluke or a breach. Be prepared to brake for moose. Maine claims to have more moose per square mile than any other state.

BASS HARBOR LIGHTHOUSE

With a maritime history and over three thousand miles of coastline, lighthouses have been crucial to Maine's past, present, and landscape. There are sixty-five in the state, but only one on Mount Desert Island: Bass Harbor Head Light. Score wicked views and Instagrammable moments from the bottom of the oceanside cliffs.

Whether you fancy picnics by the shore, bike rides along tranquil lakes, or watching for wildlife, Maine awaits your arrival. Vacationland is calling. ■