parks / Acadia National Park

The fare-free Island Explorer serves most of the park. Route 4 follows the Loop Road. Also good: Route 3 (village green to sand beach). 10 (village green to Sieur de Monts/nature center, connect with 4)
Sieur de Monts area features the Wild Gardens of Acadia, the park's Nature Center.

- Hulls Cove Visitor Center (8:30 AM–4:30 PM) is the start of Acadia's scenic Park Loop Road, a sinuous 27-mile route that includes a steep drive to the top of Cadillac Mountain.

Tour the Loop Road

- Plan for three to four hours, including some stops, is recommended for the entire 27-mile road.
- Hike Ocean Path Trail: Explore vast slabs of pink granite, picturesque cliffs, and breathtaking oceans views. Access Thunder Hole and Otter Point from Sand Beach on a gradual hike. 2.2 mile trail one way, 4.4 miles round trip. The trail is 0.7 miles from Sand Beach to Thunder Hole. (There's an estuary behind the dunes.)
- Gorham Mountain Loop is a moderate family hike
- Great Head Trail: Close to Sand Beach, this 1.4-mile loop is a short hike with some great sea views from open ledges.
- Bubbles Trail: A 1.5-mile round trip with a few steep, rocky sections that allows you to summit three of the park's high points: North Bubble, South Bubble, and Bubble Rock.
- Jordan Pond House: Popovers and tea on the lawn. 11:00 am – 5:00 pm Gift shop 9-4. (Route 6 bus returns to village green)

In Bar Harbor

- Bar Island Trail: This trail consists of a half-mile walk across a gravel bar exposed at low tide followed by a modest half-mile ascent to the top of Bar Island.

Boat Ideas

Lulu Lobster Boat Ride
Acadian Boat Tours
Bar Harbor Whale Watch Co
See Acadia from the water aboard a boat excursion or on a day trip to the Schoodic Peninsula aboard the passenger ferry connecting Bar Harbor with Winter Harbor.

Links and notes

The highest rocky headlands along the Atlantic coastline of the United States. 27 miles of historic motor roads, 158 miles of hiking trails, and 45 miles of carriage roads.

- Top 5 Things To Know Before Visiting
  - The fare-free Island Explorer serves most of the park and surrounding communities except Cadillac Mountain. Route 4 follows the Loop Road. Also good: Route 3 (village green to sand beach) and Route 2 (hotels to village green). 10 (village green to Sieur de Monts/nature center, connect with 4)
  - go.nps.gov/IslandExplorer.
  - On Carriage roads, pedestrians must yield to horses and cyclists must yield to horses and pedestrians.
  - For Accommodations in nearby towns. Visit go.nps.gov/AcadiaChambers
  - Vehicle reservations are required to drive Cadillac Summit Road from mid-May to mid-October.
- Plan Your Visit
  - Places to go
    - Hike Ocean Path Trail: Explore vast slabs of pink granite, picturesque cliffs, and breathtaking oceans views as the Ocean Path takes you along the bold coast of Maine. Access Thunder Hole and Otter Point from Sand Beach on a gradual hike. 2.2 mile trail one way, 4.4 miles round trip. The trail is 0.7 miles from Sand Beach to Thunder Hole. (There's an estuary behind the dunes.)

        - Go tide pooling to view small sea creatures, such as snails, crabs, periwinkles, urchins, barnacles, and sea stars, in coastal low-tide pools. Explore the areas found along the Wonderland Trail, Ship Harbor Trail, and Ocean Path.
        - Interpretive signs explain the varied habitats along the easy, 1.3-mile (1.2-kilometer) Ship Harbor Nature Trail loop.
        - The moderate, 2-mile (3.2-kilometer) out-and-back Beachcroft Path, known for its 1,500 pink granite steps, ascends Champlain Mountain. The views from Huguenot Head over a shallow and weedy pond, Dorr Mountain, and Bar Harbor are lovely, but continue to the 1,058-foot summit for vistas with grander views.
        - Flying Mountain's moderate 1.5-mile (2.4-kilometer) loop has spectacular views over the Cranberry Islands and Somes Sound.
    - Things to do
        - Acadia National Park has two beaches popular for swimming in the summer: Sand Beach and Echo Lake Beach. There is also a small beach for swimming at Lake Wood.
        - **Park Loop Road**: Plan for three to four hours, including some stops, is recommended for the entire 27-mile road.
        - From March into summer, peregrine falcons nest on Jordan Cliffs and the Precipice cliffs. Look skyward to find bald eagles perched in tall trees near waterways.
        - Each spring the Precipice Trail closes to allow the endangered peregrine falcons to nest and raise their young undisturbed. You can join rangers, volunteers, and partners staff at the base of the mountain to view the falcons with the aid of ranger provided scopes or on a monitors.
        - On the park's Islesford Historic and Scenic Cruise, a ranger points out sights, explains the landscape, and identifies birds and sea life, which may include seals, porpoises, and dolphins. The cruise includes a visit to the park's museum on Islesford, one of the Cranberry Islands.
        - **Touch Tank Talks**: If you visit the Schoodic District of the park, you can get up close and personal with intertidal creatures and learn how to safely explore along Acadia's rocky shorelines through our touch tank talks. Kids can explore muscles and lobsters and learn more about the ecology of Acadia's fragile tidepools. Talks typically last one half hour.
        - See Acadia from the water aboard a boat excursion or on a day trip to the Schoodic Peninsula aboard the passenger ferry connecting Bar Harbor with Winter Harbor.
    - Maps
    - public transportation, driving directions, and all things transportation

Ideas

Lulu Lobster Boat Ride
Acadian Boat Tours
Bar Harbor Whale Watch Co

Lodging

40 maritime-inspired accommodations at Salt Cottages include 30 stand-alone cottages ranging from studios to two bedrooms, plus 10 boutique motor lodge rooms.

From National Park Planner

- Overview
- Sand Beach

NatGeo

Everything to know about Acadia (News+ link)

- The Dorr Museum of Natural History at the College of the Atlantic offers displays of Maine wildlife and touch pools of live sea creatures.
- Located just south of town, the park's Sieur de Monts area features the Wild

Gardens of Acadia, the park's Nature Center.

- Hulls Cove Visitor Center (8:30 AM–4:30 PM) is the start of Acadia's scenic Park Loop Road, a sinuous 27-mile route that includes a steep drive to the top of Cadillac Mountain.
- After looping around Cadillac Mountain, the one-way Loop Road reaches the coast at Sand Beach. Protected by the Great Head peninsula, this is probably the best place in the park to take a dip in the ocean.
- The rush of water through Thunder Hole—and the roar it makes—epitomizes the forces that shaped the Acadia coast. (It's accessible via the Ocean Path Trail from Sand Beach)
- In Bar Harbor, the island's hub, the waterfront and full-service Bar Harbor Inn has two restaurants, a pool, and a spa; the harbor-view West Street Hotel has an adults-only rooftop pool and access to its sister property's outdoor pools, spa, and tennis courts; the Saltair Inn bed and breakfast occupies a handsomely restored summer cottage with a lawn rolling down to the sea; the Edenbrook Motel, comprises four buildings tiered on a hillside about a mile from downtown; the Cromwell Harbor Motel, on the southern end of downtown, has an outdoor pool; Rose Eden Cottages on Route 3 north of town, offers simple, clean, pet-friendly budget-friendly cottages."

NatGeo: Family adventures to try in Maine

- Gorham Mountain Loop is a moderate family hike
- Enjoy tea and popovers on the waterfront lawn of the Jordan Pond House.
- Dive-In Theater boat. You'll cruise to a spot near the Porcupine Islands, where the boat anchors. Diver Ed dons scuba gear, and then kids push him—and his 3-inch-tall toy sidekick Mini Ed—overboard. Those on board watch their undersea adventures on a movie screen. The boat departs from the College of the Atlantic Pier in Bar Harbor.

From Roadtrippers

- Bass Harbor Head Lighthouse: One of the main attractions on the west side of Mount Desert Island, this 33-foot lighthouse, originally raised in 1858, guards the mouth of Bass Harbor. A short hiking trail leads to nearby sea cliffs, but access to the lighthouse itself is prohibited.
- Ship Harbor Nature Trail: A relaxed 1.3-mile loop trail along the west side of Ship Harbor.
- Bar Island Trail: This trail consists of a half-mile walk across a gravel bar exposed at low tide followed by a modest half-mile ascent to the top of Bar Island.
- Great Head Trail: Close to Sand Beach, this 1.4-mile loop is a short hike with some great sea views from open ledges.
- Bubbles Trail: A 1.5-mile round trip with a few steep, rocky sections that allows you to summit three of the park's high points: North Bubble, South Bubble, and Bubble Rock.
- Jordan Pond Path: A 3.5-mile loop trail around the shoreline of Jordan Pond.

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13th October 2025
Niagara Falls

1st October 2025
Future Smokies

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