Tour Code
MC1

ADVENTURESABROAD

MARITIME CANADA

Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island & New Brunswick

12 days

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Day 1 Arrival in Halifax: Gateway to the Maritimes

The salt air greets us as we arrive in Halifax, Nova Scotia's vibrant capital where modern energy pulses through centuries-old streets. This historic port has welcomed vessels since Mi'kmaq peoples first navigated these waters, later becoming Britain's key North American naval stronghold. We check into our accommodations, ideally located in the downtown core, then meet your Tour Leader and fellow travellers for an included dinner to kick off our two-night stay.

Overnight in Halifax.

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Halifax City Tour & South Shore to Lunenburg

This morning we discover the rustic charm of the renowned fishing village of Peggy's Cove where we'll have breakfast overlooking one of the world's most photographed lighthouses. This tiny fishing village, with its iconic red-and-white lighthouse perched on 415-million-year-old stone, has captured imaginations for generations. The lighthouse, built in 1915, stands as a sentinel over waters that claimed countless vessels in the age of sail.

We begin exploring Halifax's heart through the Public Gardens, where Victorian elegance blooms in carefully tended beds that have flourished since 1867. These formal gardens represent the prosperity Halifax achieved as an imperial garrison town, their ornate bandstand echoing with ghostly melodies of military concerts past. Ascending Citadel Hill, the star-shaped fortress reveals why this strategic location made Halifax indispensable to British naval power. Built in 1856, this fourth fortification on the site commands sweeping views across the harbour approaches that once decided the fate of colonial North America.

We travel the South Shore to the UNESCO World Heritage Town of Lunenburg, renowned for her fleets of Grand Banks' fishing schooners. These colourful wooden buildings reflect German Protestant heritage from 1753, when "Foreign Protestants" were recruited by the British to counterbalance Acadian Catholic influence. Taking a walking tour, we fully experience one of the most remarkably preserved colonial settlements in the New World, then visit the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic to learn about the town's famous seafaring heritage. The legendary schooner Bluenose II may grace the harbour—a faithful replica of the vessel that graced Canada's dime and captured the International Fishermen's Trophy four consecutive times. We return to Halifax for dinner and an overnight stay.

Overnight in Halifax.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Halifax to Baddeck via Millbrook Cultural Centre

We cross into Cape Breton Island, where Scottish heritage runs as deep as the coal seams once mined beneath these Highland-like hills.

Our first stop celebrates an even older presence at the Millbrook Cultural & Heritage Centre, where Mi'kmaq storytellers share traditions spanning over 10,000 years. These are the original people of this land, whose knowledge of tides, seasons, and survival shaped the very character of Maritime culture. Their birchbark canoes once carried trade goods across the same waters we'll explore, connecting communities from the Gaspé to Maine.

Crossing the Canso Causeway—an engineering marvel completed in 1955 that connected Cape Breton to mainland Nova Scotia—we arrive in Baddeck. This charming lakeside town became the beloved summer refuge of Alexander Graham Bell, who declared these Highland vistas reminded him of his native Scotland. Bell purchased his estate here in 1885, drawn by the Bras d'Or Lakes' resemblance to Scottish lochs.

Tonight, Celtic melodies fill the air as we experience the musical heritage that Scottish immigrants carried across the ocean in the 1700s and 1800s. The fiddle tunes and Gaelic songs that echo through local venues represent an unbroken cultural chain stretching from the Hebrides to these Maritime highlands.

Overnight in Baddeck

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Cabot Trail Scenic Drive

Today we embark on one of the world's most spectacular coastal drives, the Cabot Trail, named for explorer John Cabot who may have first glimpsed this coast in 1497. Our route winds through Cape Breton Highlands National Park, where ancient Appalachian mountains—among Earth's oldest at 1.2 billion years—meet the Gulf of St. Lawrence in dramatic fashion.

The landscape tells a geological story of continental collision and glacial sculpting. These weathered peaks once rivalled the Himalayas in height, worn down by eons of erosion into the rolling plateaus we traverse today. Boreal forests of spruce and fir blanket the highlands, creating habitat for moose, black bears, and over 230 bird species.

In Cheticamp, we discover the vibrant Acadian community that has thrived here since the 1780s, their French heritage evident in everything from architectural details to the rhythm of daily life. These resilient people rebuilt their culture after the 1755 deportation, establishing fishing and farming communities that maintained French language and Catholic traditions despite British rule.

We'll have a boxed lunch before experiencing the Skyline Trail's accessible boardwalk section, which offers breathtaking panoramas where ancient mountains frame the sea. On clear days, we can see 16 kilometres across the gulf to Prince Edward Island's red shores. As we complete our loop back to Baddeck, the changing light transforms the landscape, revealing why this trail consistently ranks amongst the world's most beautiful drives.

Overnight in Baddeck (dinner on your own this evening)

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 5 Louisbourg Excursion

We journey to the Fortress of Louisbourg, one of North America's largest historical reconstructions, where costumed interpreters bring 1744 to vivid life. This mighty French stronghold, built between 1720-1740 at enormous cost, represented New France's grandest military investment, designed to protect the lucrative cod fishery and guard the Gulf of St. Lawrence approaches.

Walking these meticulously reconstructed cobblestone streets, we witness how European powers carved empires from this rugged coast. The fortress fell to British forces in 1758 during the Seven Years' War, fundamentally changing North American destiny. Within these walls, French soldiers, merchants, and fishermen created a bustling colonial town that briefly rivalled Quebec and Boston in importance.

Returning to Baddeck, we explore the Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site, where the telephone's inventor spent his final decades conducting experiments with flight, marine engineering, and deaf education. Bell's Baddeck laboratory produced the Silver Dart, which achieved the first powered flight in the British Commonwealth in 1909. His hydrofoil boats set world water-speed records on these very lakes.

Bell called Baddeck his "heaven on earth," and standing by the Bras d'Or Lakes—whose name means "golden arm" in French—we understand why this brilliant mind found peace in these Highland vistas. The lakes' unique ecosystem, where saltwater mingles with fresh, creates perfect conditions for oyster farming that continues today.

Overnight in Baddeck.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Baddeck, NS - Ferry to Charlottetown, PEI

We bid farewell to Cape Breton and journey to the Northumberland Strait, where the ferry MV Holiday Island carries us across waters that

have connected these Maritime communities for generations. The 75-minute crossing to Prince Edward Island offers spectacular views of the red sandstone cliffs that define PEI's character—these striking formations date back 280 million years, when this region lay under tropical seas.

The ferry crossing follows ancient Mi'kmaq canoe routes that connected seasonal camps across what they called "Abegweit"—"cradled on the waves." European settlers later recognized these same strategic waterways, establishing ferry services in the 1760s that evolved into today's modern vessels.

Arriving in Charlottetown, we enter Canada's birthplace, where 23 Fathers of Confederation gathered in September 1864 to forge a new nation. The intimate scale of this provincial capital, with its tree-lined streets and Victorian architecture, reminds us that momentous decisions often happen in surprisingly modest settings. Province House, where confederation was conceived, remains remarkably unchanged since those historic meetings.

The city's compact core reflects careful 18th-century planning, with streets laid out in a grid pattern that accommodated both military defense and civilian commerce. Charlottetown's harbour provided the crucial deep-water port that made PEI strategically valuable despite its small size.

Tonight we enjoy dinner, followed by a performance by local entertainers showcasing the island's rich cultural traditions.

Overnight in Charlottetown.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 Prince Edward Island Touring

Prince Edward Island National Park showcases the red sand beaches and rolling dunes that have shaped island life for millennia. These striking crimson shores result from iron-rich sandstone, constantly sculpted by some of the warmest saltwater north of the Carolinas. The park protects crucial habitat for over 300 bird species, including the endangered piping plover that nests in these fragile dune systems.

At the Anne of Green Gables Heritage Place, we step into L.M. Montgomery's imagination, where a red-haired orphan captured hearts worldwide. Montgomery drew inspiration from this actual Cavendish farmstead, transforming rural PEI life into literature that has been translated into dozens of languages. The author's profound connection to this landscape—"I love every field and wood and lane and shore"—resonates as we follow Anne's footsteps through rooms and gardens that sparked literary magic.

Montgomery's success emerged from deep island roots; her family had farmed this land since the 1770s. Her intimate knowledge of seasonal rhythms, community dynamics, and Maritime culture created authentic characters that transcended their rural origins to achieve global resonance.

A stop at Cow's Creamery introduces us to island-made ice cream that has become synonymous with PEI summer pleasures. The creamery's success reflects the island's agricultural excellence—rich red soil and ideal climate produce dairy products of exceptional quality. We return to Charlottetown for dinner and an overnight stay.

Overnight in Charlottetown

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 Charlottetown, PEI to Moncton, NB

The impressive Confederation Bridge carries us high above Northumberland Strait—at 12.9 kilometres, it's the longest bridge over ice-covered waters in the world. Completed in 1997 after decades of debate, this engineering marvel forever changed island life, replacing ferries that had been PEI's only fixed link since 1873. The bridge's construction required innovative ice-resistant design, as winter ice formations in these waters can reach significant thickness.

After a stop at Cape Jourimain Nature Centre, we continue to Shediac, New Brunswick's self-proclaimed "Lobster Capital of the World," where an enormous fibreglass crustacean welcomes visitors with good humour. But Shediac's claim runs deeper than promotional whimsy—these waters produce some of Atlantic Canada's finest lobsters, their sweet meat owing to ideal combinations of cold water and sandy-bottom feeding grounds.

The town's Acadian heritage dates to 1758, when deportation survivors returned to rebuild their communities along these shores. Their perseverance created a distinct culture blending French traditions with Maritime adaptations, evident in local architecture, cuisine, and annual festivals that celebrate Acadian survival.

We have an unforgettable culinary experience with a scrumptious lobster dinner on a lobster boat, where local fishermen demonstrate traditional fishing methods and explain sustainable harvesting practices that maintain lobster populations while supporting families who have worked these waters for generations. Afterwards, we travel to Moncton and check into our downtown hotel for the evening.

Overnight in Moncton.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Shediac to Saint John

Saint John is New Brunswick's largest city, built on bedrock that began forming 500 million years ago when this region lay near the equator. The city's dramatic topography, carved by the Saint John River's meeting with Fundy tides, creates the famous Reversing Falls where twice-daily tidal surges actually reverse the river's flow.

Today we encounter one of nature's most dramatic daily performances at Hopewell Rocks, where the Bay of Fundy demonstrates the world's highest tides. Twice daily, 160 billion tonnes of water surge in and out of this bay—more than the combined flow of all the world's freshwater rivers. These extreme tides, reaching up to 16 metres, carved the famous "Flowerpot Rocks" from red sandstone clifftops over thousands of years.
Depending on date and time, we may walk the ocean floor amongst towering sea stacks crowned with spruce and fir trees that somehow find purchase in the rocky crevices. Six hours later, these same formations stand as islands in a churning sea, demonstrating tidal forces that early European explorers found almost supernatural in their power.

The Fundy ecosystem, enriched by these massive tidal movements, supports an extraordinary array of marine life. Nutrient-rich mudflats provide feeding grounds for millions of migrating shorebirds, while deep tidal pools harbour species found nowhere else in Atlantic Canada.

Our route through Fundy National Park reveals how glacial action and ongoing tidal forces continue shaping this ancient landscape. The park protects remnants of the Acadian Forest, a unique ecosystem where northern and southern tree species intermingle. We have dinner and an overnight stay in Saint John.

Overnight in Saint John.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Saint John - St Andrews, NB - Ferry to Digby, NS

Today we travel by road south to St. Andrews-by-the-Sea, which exemplifies Maritime resort elegance, where wealthy industrialists built summer estates overlooking Passamaquoddy Bay beginning in the 1890s. This charming town has welcomed visitors for over a century, its tree-lined streets and heritage architecture creating an atmosphere of refined coastal living that attracted everyone from Canadian Pacific Railway executives to American "robber barons."

Our day trip reveals the town's extraordinary founding story. In 1783, American Loyalists literally moved their entire community here—dismantling houses board by board in Castine, Maine, and rebuilding them on this protected harbour. Walking these streets, we discover architectural gems that crossed international borders, creating a distinctly American colonial aesthetic within British North America.

At Kingsbrae Garden, we stroll through 27 acres of horticultural artistry, where Maritime flora flourishes in carefully designed landscapes that showcase both native species and exotic varieties thriving in this mild coastal climate. The garden's windmill and heritage roses reflect the Dutch and English gardening traditions that shaped Maritime landscaping.

Returning to Saint John, the Fundy Rose ferry carries us across these legendary tidal waters to Digby, Nova Scotia. The 2.5-hour crossing offers spectacular views of the Bay of Fundy's dramatic coastlines while we anticipate our arrival in the scallop capital of the world. We check into our accommodation overlooking the Annapolis Basin.

Overnight in Digby.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11 Digby - Annapolis Valley - Halifax

The Annapolis Valley cradles some of Canada's most poignant history, beginning at Fort Anne where four nations—Mi'kmaq, French, British, and eventually Canadian—have claimed sovereignty since 1605. This strategic site witnessed the constant struggle for North American supremacy, changing hands multiple times as European powers battled for control of this harbour that provided access to the continent's interior.

The Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens, just steps away, celebrate four centuries of horticultural adaptation. From Acadian agricultural techniques that created vast farmlands by dyking saltwater marshes, to Victorian formal gardens reflecting British imperial confidence, each themed section tells how newcomers adapted European traditions to Maritime conditions.

We then journey to Port Royal National Historic Site, where Samuel de Champlain established North America's first successful European settlement north of Florida in 1605. This meticulously reconstructed habitation demonstrates how French colonists survived their first brutal winter through indigenous knowledge and European ingenuity, creating the foundation for what would become Acadia.

Continuing through the valley, we reach Grand-Pré National Historic Site, scene of one of Canadian history's most tragic chapters. In 1755, British forces forcibly expelled over 11,000 Acadians from their prosperous farmlands, scattering families across the globe in Le Grand Dérangement. These peaceful farmers had created a unique culture blending French traditions with New World innovation, developing dyking systems that turned saltwater marshes into fertile fields.

Longfellow's epic poem "Evangeline" immortalised this tragedy, making Grand-Pré synonymous with love lost and homeland remembered. We finish our evening in Halifax and have one last dinner in the Maritimes.

Overnight in Halifax

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 12 Departure from Halifax

As we return to Halifax Stanfield International Airport, we carry with us memories of three distinct provinces and the diverse communities that call the Maritimes home.

Departure from Halifax - BON VOYAGE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast