

ATLANTIC CANADA

Nova Scotia & Cape Breton, PEI, New Brunswick & the Fundy Isles

15 days

Created on: 26 Apr, 2024

Day 1 Arrive in Halifax

Arrive in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Halifax is a mid-sized city steeped in history with attractive and charming heritage buildings and the world's second largest natural harbour after Sydney, Australia. Known as the "Warden of the North" for its historic military defences, Halifax grew up around the Citadel still dominating the central core. Named after England's second Earl of Halifax, this is the provincial capital of Nova Scotia and Canada's principal ice-free port on the eastern seaboard.

Overnight in Halifax.

Included Meal(s): Dinner, if required.

Day 2 Halifax & The South Shore

This morning we depart Halifax for a scenic shoreline drive to Peggy's Cove. We take time here for lunch and to enjoy the famous lighthouse, rocks, and harbour. We then travel along the shore of St Margaret's Bay to arrive in Lunenburg. The Old Town has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its excellent preservation of its 18th and 19th century architecture. As we tour the Lunenburg Fisheries Museum, we learn about life of commercial fishers.

We return to Halifax in the late afternoon.

Overnight in Halifax.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Halifax: Walking Tour - Baddeck

This morning we have a guided, partly-walking tour of Halifax, seeing historic churches, government buildings, the historic restored waterfront, public gardens and Citadel Hill. We also visit the grave site for over 150 victims of the Titanic disaster.

We then depart for a scenic journey north to Cape Breton Island and Baddeck,* located on the northern shore of the Bras d'Or Lakes, North America's largest inland sea. Baddeck is a bustling village that maintains its essence as a quaint community and is considered to be the beginning and end of the world famous Cabot Trail.

* Due to limited accommodation choices in Baddeck during high season (summer), we may stay somewhere else nearby, ie Sydney or Port Hawkesbury.

Overnight in Baddeck.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 The Cabot Trail

Today we explore the famous Cabot Trail, one of Canada's grandest roads. The actual trail stretches 305 km (190 miles) across Cape Breton Island starting from the town of Baddeck. It climbs to 500m (1,640 feet) between mountain and sea. The coast is rocky and rugged, the interior a blend of mountains, valleys, rivers and lakes. We will have time to stop in Cheticamp, a vibrant Acadian destination and a gateway to the Cape Breton Highlands National Park. The name, Cheticamp, is hybrid from the Miqmaq and the French. Actually, the first Acadians

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construed the name to mean Chetif Camp meaning, "Poor Camping Ground." The first permanent settlement on the Cheticamp harbour was made in 1785-86, by 14 Acadian families. Most of these families had been driven from peninsular Nova Scotia in the Expulsion, thirty years before.

Overnight in Baddeck.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Baddeck & Louisbourg

This morning we visit the Alexander Graham Bell Museum in Baddeck. This museum highlights the inventor's life and many of his fascinating projects.

A highlight today is the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site, the largest historical reconstruction in North America and the town of Louisbourg. Hear the cannons and muskets fire, watch the changing of the guard and meet the villagers at this meticulously-preserved and recreated French fortification of over 250 years ago.

Return to Baddeck.

Overnight in Baddeck.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Baddeck - Pictou, Nova Scotia - Ferry to PEI

This morning we head south, traversing the scenic Nova Scotia countryside, spot little farms, glittering stretches of blue water, and rocky headlands before arriving at the lovely harbour of Pictou. We cross the Northumberland Strait to magical Prince Edward Island (90 minutes by ferry) and picturesque Charlottetown,* the capital of this most tranquil and beautiful province. It is here in Founders Hall that Canada became a Confederation in 1867.

During our time on the island, we hope to visit PEI National Park at Greenwich (weather and ferry schedules permitting). Experience a sense of awe and serenity as you take in the towering parabolic dune system and pristine white sand beaches. The extensive trail system offers a floating boardwalk and interpretive panelling. The Greenwich Interpretation Centre features interactive and multi-media displays that bring the region to life, highlighting evidence of 10,000 years of human history.

* Due to the lack of hotel accommodation in this small town, especially during high season, our hotel may not be central; however, locating just outside the centre benefits the convenience of getting into/out of the city due to traffic problems around the capital.

Overnight in Charlottetown.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 Prince Edward Island

This morning we tour the Charlottetown area, seeing churches, Victorian homes, and the Confederation Centre of the Arts. You will also have free time to browse on your own in this beautiful "Garden City". Charlottetown is the smallest of all Canadian provincial capitals, with 31,000 inhabitants, and lies in the middle of a fertile agricultural region. The red stone fronts of the old buildings and the "gingerbread" architecture of the wooden houses in the side streets are reminiscent of the past (please note that Province House has been closed periodically for renovations and may be unavailable for visiting).

This afternoon we continue our exploration of this island of sunshine and surf, pink sands, gentle hills and picturesque valleys. We pay a visit to Lucy Maud Montgomery's Green Gables and Cavendish Beach.

Overnight in Charlottetown.

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Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 PEI - Shediac, New Brunswick

We cross back over the Northumberland Strait, this time by the Confederation Bridge, an eight-mile-long engineering wonder that takes us into the province of New Brunswick and our destination, Shediac, known as The Lobster Capital of the World for lobster fishing, processing plants, live-lobster tanks, and fine restaurants specializing in this delicious crustacean.

Shediac is also a community of firsts. New Brunswick's first steam sawmill was built here, the first passenger railroad in the Maritimes was located here, and this is where the first shipbuilding firm in New Brunswick started out. And with such a vibrant and rich Acadian heritage, it's also fitting that this was the home of the first Congrès mondial acadien (Acadian World Congress). Hundreds of years ago, the Mi'kmaq encampment of "Es-ed-ei-ik" was one of the major camps in southeast New Brunswick. The Mi'kmaq word "Es-ed-ei-ik" which means "running far in" (in reference to the tide, which has a long range over the shallow, sandy beaches) eventually transformed into Gédaique. Acadians first arrived at Shediac in 1749 as a result of the Acadian Exodus from peninsular Nova Scotia.

Today Shediac is a pretty, charming place whose location has us well-placed for tomorrow's full day of travel and sightseeing.

This evening we enjoy a traditional lobster feast (NOTE: depending on certain variables, such as timing and seasonality, our lobster experience may occur at some other point on our tour. Non-lobster choices are available).

Overnight in Shediac.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Shediac - Hopewell Rocks - Fundy National Park - Saint John

En route to Saint John, we'll visit the magnificently-eroded Hopewell Rocks, one of the Marine Wonders of the World, and the site of some of the world's highest tides. Observe the majestic "flower-pot rocks," unique formations carved by erosion over thousands of years. Here one can experience tides rising up to 4-storeys high, making it possible to kayak, at high tide, over the same area you may have recently walked at low tide! This site offers an interpretive centre with a multi-media exhibit, a comprehensive interpretive program, a one-of-a-kind gift shop and a restaurant with a panoramic view of the Bay of Fundy.

We continue through Fundy National Park, which showcases a rugged coastline which rises up to the Acadian Highlands and more than 25 waterfalls. When one looks across the bay, one can see the northern Nova Scotia coast.

Upon arrival in Saint John, we will have a leisurely walking tour of this compact and charming harbour town, including a visit to the Old City Market, a meeting place and farmer's market since 1876; it is the oldest continuing farmer's market in all of Canada. The roof of the City Market resembles the inverted keel of a ship, with hand-hewn timbers and dove-tailed joints that have stood fast for more than a century. Saint John is known as the 'Fundy City' due to its location on the north shore of the Bay of Fundy at the mouth of the Saint John River, as well as being the only city on the bay. In 1785, Saint John became the first incorporated city in Canada.

Overnight in Saint John.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Saint John - New Brunswick Museum - Grand Manan Island

This morning we visit the New Brunswick Museum in Saint John, which provides a remarkable introduction to New Brunswick's rich cultural history and diverse natural environment. At Canada's oldest continuing museum, visitors will discover stories of New Brunswick's past and present on three floors of creative exhibitions. In the "Hall of Great Whales," visitors see the actual skeleton and life-sized model of a North Atlantic Right whale and learn about the fascinating marine life in the Bay of Fundy.

Saint John is also the jumping off point for a visit to the Fundy Isles, an isolated and relatively untouristed island group at the mouth of the

Bay of Fundy. From Black's Harbour we ferry 1.5 hours to the largest of the Fundy Isles, Grand Manan, with its unspoiled natural beauty and friendly people. This special place offers a pleasant blend of active fishing communities and the beauty and serenity of nature at its best. Painters, photographers, rockhounds and hikers will find opportunities everywhere.

Over 240 species of birds make the island their home. From spring nesting to fall migration to winter rarities, birdwatchers can reach for their binoculars with delight. There are also plenty of whales; sightings of these magnificent creatures include the rare right whale, finback and humpback whales.

On arrival we have a tour of the Grand Manan Museum, which showcases the history of Grand Manan -- the island, people and fisheries, as well as the Allan Moses Bird Collection, a view of some of its wildlife; and through the Geology Collection, many of the fascinating natural wonders the island has to offer. Time- (and weather-) permitting, we may be able to head to a viewpoint to admire one of the most photogenic lighthouses in Atlantic Canada -- Swallowtail, designated a Local Historic Place for its association with the island's long history attached to the sea. Swallowtail Light was first lit in 1860; the current Light Keeper's House was built in 1958.

Overnight on Grand Manan.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11 Grand Manan Island

This morning (or some other time during our stay, weather and scheduling of today's boat excursion depending) we visit the Grand Manan Whale & Seabird Research Station, great little marine natural history museum with displays on whales, seals, seabirds, fish, sharks and invertebrates with additional information on how whales survive in the oceans. They highlight the endangered right whale and conservation efforts to protect them while in the Bay of Fundy, and their unique Harbour Porpoise Release Program, helping herring weir operators safely release entrapped porpoises and other large marine animals.

Later we travel by open boat (1.5 hours) to Machias Seal Island (picnic lunch en route).* The island is barely a mile long at low tide, and a few hundred feet wide. A lighthouse is located there and in the non-nesting season the only occupants on the island are the two lighthouse keepers (kept there by the Canadian Government in order to assert its sovereignty, as both Canada and the USA claim the island). During the nesting season it becomes home to thousands of pelagic birds. The most noted species is the Atlantic Puffin, but other species such as the Razorbill Auk and Common and Arctic Terns add to the viewing enjoyment. No matter where you stand on the island, you will see thousands of birds flying by.

* PLEASE NOTE that, due to the vagaries of climate change, the mating behaviour of puffins is less predictable than historical norms. If we find that the puffins have moved on (or not yet arrived) for our planned visit, we may substitute a different boat-based excursion on this day.

Overnight on Grand Manan.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 12 Grand Manan - Deer Island - Campobello Island

Today we return to the mainland by ferry (the first of three today!), and then connect with a smaller (vehicular) vessel to Deer Island (30 min). Transitting Deer Island is the only way to reach Campobello Island from Canada (it's a much longer journey to travel through neighbouring Maine). While on Deer, we'll pause to take a look around and to have a break for lunch. Deer Island has a land mass of only 45 square kilometers; for comparison's sake that's a little bigger than the country of Liechtenstein in Europe. But for such a small island there's a lot of rural and coastal beauty.

Later we catch the vehicular ferry (20 min) to Campobello Island, located opposite the town of Eastport, Maine. Nearby is the "Old Sow," the largest tidal whirlpool in the Western Hemisphere. Campobello has long been an isolated natural getaway for residents of Boston, New York, Montreal etc, seeking a break from the urban lifestyle and humid heat of summer. It's a sleepy place of tremendous natural beauty, fog, sun, rain, wind, fog again, and a laid-back lifestyle.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to a shortage of suitable accommodation on Campobello Island, NB, we may have to spend our nights just across the border in Maine, USA. As such, travellers on this tour must be in possession of a valid passport in order to cross this land border with the United States and back into Canada.

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Overnight in Lubec, Maine

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 13 Campobello: Whale Watching & Roosevelt International Park

This morning we embark on a whale watching boat excursion (+/- 2.5 hours) in the protected waters around Campobello. If we're lucky, Minke, Finback, Humpback and Northern Right whales can be observed. Porpoises and myriad bird species are also commonly seen. We also plan to learn more about a local volunteer organization that saves whales in distress, most commonly by getting entangled in fishing gear.

Later we visit the Campobello Roosevelt International Park. The late U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt spent his summers on Campobello Island, where he loved to sail, hike, and picnic. He first visited as a boy, and later with his wife, Eleanor, and their children. It's easy to see what brought the man who became a great American president back to this Canadian island year after year. We tour the Roosevelt summer home, a truly impressive residence with 34 rooms. Guides are on hand to answer your questions about everything from the design and construction of the house, to the day-to-day life of the Roosevelt family. We explore the exhibits and artifacts in the Visitor Centre.

At some point during our day, we'll enjoy "Tea With Eleanor," a very special event whereby we enjoy tea and treats and an informative and compelling presentation on the life and times of Eleanor Roosevelt.

Overnight in Lubec, Maine.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 14 Campobello - Saint Andrews-by-the-Sea

Today we travel back to the mainland and the charming harbour town of Saint Andrews.

Saint Andrews was founded in 1783 by the United Empire Loyalists. This little seaside town is well preserved with many of the original buildings still gracing the Town Plat. Some of these buildings were barged to the area from Castine, Maine at the end of the Revolutionary War and are listed under the New Brunswick and Canadian Registry of Historic Places. Today, Saint Andrews represents one of the best-preserved examples of colonial heritage in North America. While maintaining its charm, Saint Andrews is also a dynamic, prosperous community.

On arrival we'll stop at the Saint Andrews Blockhouse National Historic Site, where you will step back in time to an era of conflict along New Brunswick's border with the United States. Imagine a time when these neighbours were at war! Fearful of American invasion, townspeople built this blockhouse, to military specifications, during the War of 1812.

The balance of the day is yours to enjoy Saint Andrews. Highly recommended is a visit to Kingsbrae Garden and a stroll up the town's main street.

Overnight in Saint Andrews.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 15 Saint Andrews - Saint John Airport - Departure

Transfer from Saint Andrews to the Saint John Airport (YSJ, 1 hr 20 min) to connect with homeward flights.

For Land & Air customers this transfer is included; Land Only participants can book a transfer at an added cost.

BON VOYAGE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast