

Downeast Maine – From Sunrise to Seaspray

Where is Downeast Maine? Downeast Maine is generally defined as the coastal region encompassing Hancock and Washington Counties, stretching from Ellsworth eastward to the Canadian border. Known as a "working coast," it is distinct for its rugged, rural nature, high tides, and historic maritime culture.

A Sailing Term - The name originates from the 18th/19th century. Sailors leaving Boston or New York traveled east toward Maine. Because the prevailing winds were from the southwest, ships sailed "downwind" and east, merging into "Downeast" .

1. **See a movie, concert or show at the Stonington Opera House, Stonington**

The Stonington Opera House is celebrating 21 years of theater, film, music, and dance on one of the busiest working waterfronts in Maine. The Opera House, in the center of the village, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and has been fully restored. The trip to Stonington is a treat itself. Allow time to wander around one of the most charming hard-working fishing villages you will ever visit. Stonington consistently ranks as the top producer of lobster statewide.

2. **Explore Nervous Nellie' s Jams and Jellies, Deer Isle** - A unique, admission-free destination combining a high-quality jam kitchen with a whimsical, sprawling outdoor sculpture park. Visitors can tour "Nellieville," an eclectic village filled with Peter Beerits' found-object sculptures, ranging from Wild West towns to fantasy scenes, while enjoying handmade, locally sourced jams and chutneys. The tiny shop is filled with shelf goods, housewares, gifts and clever things made by Maine artisans. A cross between classy and rustic. No lighthouse, moose or lobster key chains.

3. **Shop downtown Ellsworth** The gateway to Acadia, the quintessential New England town, Ellsworth has a charming downtown with varied architecture. Be sure to get off the highway to visit the main street shopping area. It is like stepping back into yesterday.



4. **Learn to Sea Kayak, Ellsworth** Whether you aspire to enjoy quiet island sunsets or surf the biggest tidal races in Maine, Downeast Maine is a great spot to learn. The options are nearly limitless, from an exciting day exploring the cliffs and waves that surround the Porcupine Islands, to a calm-water paddle among seals and eagles with time for your lunch on a rocky, spruce-dotted island. This team comes to you and works with individuals or small groups.

5. **Visit The Great Maine Lumberjack Show, Trenton** 12 exciting events packed into an hour and 15-minute show. Axe throwing. Log Rolling. Underhand Chopping. Power Hot Sawing. Obstacle Pole Relay. Crosscut Sawing. Pole Climbing. Hosted by Tina Scheer, a Castaway on CBS Survivor: Panama - Exile Island

6. **Hike/Drive the Five-Mile Schoodic Loop Road** The only part of Acadia National Park on the mainland, for now this section sees very little traffic. Enjoy it before it changes! It's the true edge of the world out here, especially on Schoodic Point. There is a good chance it will be only you and the gulls contemplating the waves.

And don't miss **Raven's Nest**. This is a favorite spot among photographers, where the tallest cliffs of the area surround several isolated coves. An unofficial trail heads through the woods to the exposed cliffs. Warning: take extreme care and stay away from the cliff edges as any fall could be fatal; there are no easy ways to climb up or down to the isolated coves.

7. **Stroll through Downtown Bar Harbor**

This resort town on Frenchman's Bay, star of most of America's top ten lists, lives up to its hype. It has appeared on Top Ten Most Beautiful, Top Ten Best to See Foliage, and Top Ten Prettiest Coastal Town, just to name a few. Walk down West Street, a designated historic district, to see the shingled-style mansions that survived the 1947 fire.

8. **Visit the Abbe Museum, Bar Harbor** We are in the homeland of the Abenaki, the People of the Dawn. The Abbe Museum shares the history and culture of Maine's Native people, collectively known as the Wabanaki (Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Micmac, and Maliseet), and operates from two locations -- in



downtown Bar Harbor and in Acadia National Park. The Abbe is a museum of the Abenaki, art, history, and culture.

9. **Drive the Park Loop Road** Roll the windows down and let in that warm sea breeze as you head out to tour Acadia's Park Loop Road. Turn on your favorite playlist and enjoy the ride!

The 27-mile road that loops around Acadia National Park is the best scenic drive in the area, taking

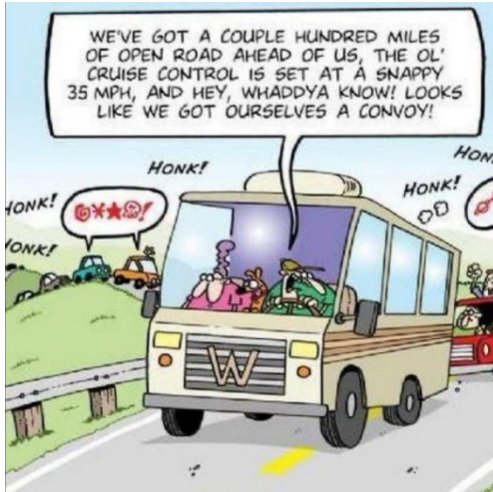
visitors from the ocean to the mountains and everywhere in between. Set aside at least 4 hours for the drive, but it could easily take a full day. There are lots of places to stop along the way, but here are some of the best sights:

Thunder Hole is appropriately named after the booming sound the ocean waves make as they slam against the rocky shore while pushing air and settled water to the surface.

Less than a mile past Thunder Hole, there will be a parking area for **Otter Point**. This rocky shoreline is named after Acadia National Park's spunky river otters. The most impressive feature at this stop is Otter Cliff, which stands an impressive 110 ft high! This is a great spot to hang out in the sun and watch the ocean waves crash over the rocks.

Take part in the tradition. The Jordan Pond House in Acadia National Park has a famous tradition of serving tea & popovers outside on the lawn overlooking Jordan Pond and the Bubble Mountains that began in the late 1800's and continues to this day on Mount Desert Island, Maine.

Stretch Your Legs The Jordan Pond Loop is the perfect spot to take a hike. This 3.5 mile loop will take you along the shores of Jordan Pond. Most of the terrain is level or a boardwalk trail, but there are a couple of rocky spots.



10. Travel the Schoodic Scenic Byway. (29 miles) Visitors can escape the hustle and bustle of modern life by travelling along the Schoodic National Scenic Byway, an unspoiled, uncrowded coastal Maine jewel. In the Schoodic Area, mountains meet sea, art meets nature, and lobster meets the belly. Visitors will enjoy endless opportunities for outdoor adventures and discover a vibrant community of artisans, historic sites, museums, and places to experience the

coast of Maine. Access from Rte 1 in Hancock.

11. Bike the famous Carriage Roads of Acadia Park, Bar Harbor Cycle over the 45 miles of well-maintained carriage road that winds through Acadia. You can pedal over 17 stone-faced bridges, past a dozen ponds and lakes, and go up gentle hills and check out breathtaking coastal Maine scenery. You' ll have plenty of room and a smooth ride on the 16-foot-wide roads studded with coping stones - large blocks of granite that serve as guardrails. And there' s no need to watch out for cars – the roads are motor vehicle-free. Several places to rent bikes intown. **Another idea** for an old-fashioned adventure, enjoy the roads from a **horse drawn carriage**. A charming glimpse into how they were experienced when first created

12. Fort Knox & Penobscot Narrows Observatory, Bucksport Tour a massive, remarkably preserved 19th-century fort and take an elevator up a bridge tower for stunning views.

13. Reversing Falls, Pembroke – A rare natural phenomenon where massive tidal changes (up to 24 feet) interact with narrow, rocky coastal channels, causing water to reverse its flow, creating whirlpools, high swells, and "boiling" rapids. Typically best viewed at mid-tide.

“I would rather feel bad in Maine than feel good anywhere else” EB White

14. Blue Barrens Farm, Cherryfield - Offers a look into a 200-acre organic, family-run operation in the heart of the "blueberry capital of the world".

15. Take a food tour, Bar Harbor –

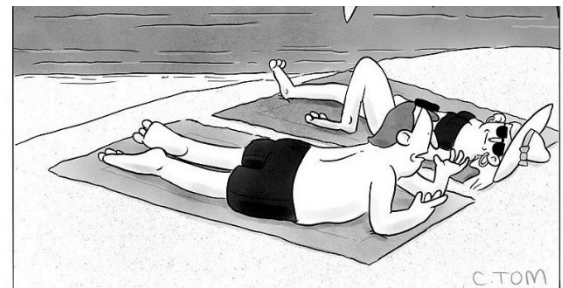
- **Bar Harbor Culinary Walking Tour:** Features tastings at multiple locations, covering local history, lobster specialties, and maritime lore.
- **Lobster Roll Crawl:** A specialized tour focused on sampling different versions of Maine's iconic sandwich in downtown Bar Harbor

16. Haul your own traps!, Bar Harbor - The Lulu Lobster Boat offers an authentic, hands-on 2-hour educational tour aboard a traditional, 42-foot Downeast-style lobster boat. Led by a local captain and crew, it highlights Maine's lobster industry by demonstrating how traps are hauled, measuring catches, and providing opportunities to see, touch, and hold live lobsters while viewing local wildlife like seals and eagles.

17. Lighthouse Tour Robertson Sea Tour, Millbridge Offers tours to Petit Manan, Narraguagus, and Nash Island Light, often featuring wildlife viewing and lobster trap hauling.

18. Enjoy a beach Day

- **Sand Beach in Acadia National Park** is special because it is a rare, 300-yard-long sandy beach nestled between dramatic granite cliffs and rocky headlands, making it one of the most scenic spots in Downeast Maine. The sand is not typical rock sand, but rather made of broken shells—mussels, sea urchins, and barnacles—creating a unique, soft texture.
- **Seal Harbor Beach, Mount Desert Island** A popular sandy spot on the southern side of the island.



"This place is nice, but what would we really do if we lived here? Lie around and be happy all the time?"

- **Causeway Beach, Deer Isle:** A small sandy spot popular for exploring at low tide.
- **Echo Lake Beach Acadia National Park** Known as the best freshwater swimming in Acadia National Park, it has a sandy beach, lifeguard, and warmer water.
- **Back Beach, Seal Harbor** A quieter alternative close to Seal Harbor Beach with a mix of sand, pebbles, and tide pools.
- **Lamoine Beach Park, Lamoine** A rocky beach with a few sandy stretches, offering swimming, and a restroom.
- **Hadley Point Beach, Bar Harbor** - Public beach and park with a boat ramp offering sunset views and canoe/kayak launching

Donnell Pond Public Reserved Land, located near Franklin and Sullivan, offers some of the clearest, most pristine lake swimming in Downeast Maine. It serves as a quieter alternative to Acadia National Park, featuring sandy beaches, stunning mountain views, and remote, undeveloped shorelines A lovely, quiet spot popular for swimming, often with fewer crowds than in Acadia. Dogs are welcome!

19. **Stroll the Bucksport Waterfront Walkway:** A mile-long, flat walkway that provides scenic views of the Penobscot Narrows Bridge and Fort Knox. Along the way, **Visit the "Witch's Tomb" at Buck Cemetery:** View the tombstone of town founder Jonathan Buck, famously known for a mysterious stain resembling a woman's leg, tied to a local curse legend. Google it!



20. **The Big Chicken Barn, Ellsworth** - a massive 21,600-square-foot former poultry facility known as a premier destination for antique hunters and bibliophiles. It features over 50 antique dealers on the first floor and houses a massive collection of over 150,000 used books and magazines on the second floor.

21. **Shop local! Artisans and Antiques Winter Harbor** - Known for crafts, including items made from repurposed lobster traps.

22. Shop Renys (A Maine Adventure), Ellsworth – Customers enjoy finding great deals in a treasure-hunt style setting, often on rainy days. Known for the slogan "If Renys doesn't have it, I don't need it," it offers a constantly changing, eclectic mix of clothing, toys, household essentials, and gourmet food at significant discounts. The store heavily features Maine-made products, including specialty foods and popular, locally branded items.

23. Enjoy a Maine Community Supper - Supporting a Maine community fundraising supper offers visitors an authentic connection while supporting local efforts. These gatherings often take place in local Granges, community centers, churches, or in partnership with local organizations, creating a strong local, and non-Partisan space for diners to connect. Some community suppers, particularly in rural areas, maintain the traditional Maine bean supper, featuring baked beans, coleslaw, and locally made pies. Many are potluck dinners featuring heirloom recipes. These gatherings are more than just food; they are designed to strengthen community, celebrate local food, and ensure everyone feels seen and included.

