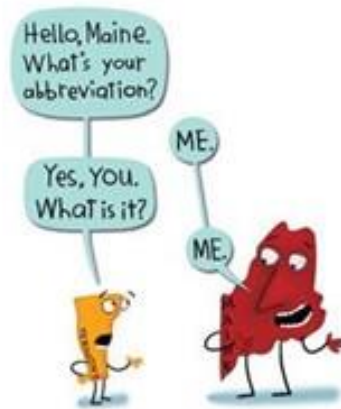


Midcoast Maine – Harbors, Hikes and Highlights

Mid-Coast Maine is the area from Brunswick to Searsport and is mainly — as the name suggests — the area along the coast. The bays here are called Muscongus and Penobscot Bay. And it's simply breathtaking. However, this region does stretch inland so don't be fooled into thinking it's just coastline and coastal towns. There is a stunning interior to this piece of Maine for sure.

1. **Explore!** Popular tourist towns like Camden and Boothbay Harbor are on everyone's list and they certainly have their charms and are worth visiting. But there are hidden gems close by.

- **Belfast, Maine**, is a charming, quintessential New England coastal town known for its authentic working waterfront on Penobscot Bay, vibrant local arts scene, and walkable, historic downtown. It captures a nostalgic charm with 19th-century architecture, a bustling farmers' market, eclectic shops, and a welcoming, slow-paced atmosphere. The Belfast Harbor Walk connects the town to the sea, offering beautiful views and easy access to nature.
- **Damariscotta, Maine**, is a charming "Twin Village" on the Midcoast, treasured for its historic, bustling Main Street, stunning riverfront views, and world-renowned oyster industry. It combines classic New England architecture, local arts, and shops like **Renys** (a Maine adventure!) with a quiet, friendly atmosphere and a rich 2,500-year history.
- **Hope, Maine** – Located seven miles north of the coastal hubs of Camden and Rockport, Hope is a thriving farming community. It is home to the beloved **Hope General Store** and several specialty farms producing dairy, apples, and Christmas trees.
- **Union, Maine** - Famous for its classic New England town common, Union is home to the **Union Fair** and several local wineries and creameries. It offers a quintessential agricultural landscape of blueberry barrens and orchards
- **Liberty, Maine** is often described as the "coolest" of the inland Midcoast towns because of its unique mix of **industrial history, quirky retail, and pristine lake life**. While it is a quiet, rural community of fewer than 1,000



residents, it serves as a major draw for visitors looking for an "off-the-beaten-path" experience

2. **Take a hike! (Or a pleasant walk)** There are 1000s of hikes in Maine. Maine Trail Finder is the best resource for hikes all over Maine. Here are our favorites in the Midcoast.

- **Mount Battie, Camden Hills State Park-** Anyone wanting an expansive view of Maine's iconic coastline should consider a visit to the summit of Mount Battie in Camden Hills State Park.

What could be better than to visit the very place that inspired Edna St Vincent Millay to write her famous poem, "Renescence"?

*All I could see from where I stood
was three long mountains and a wood;
I turned and looked the other way,
And saw three islands in a bay.
So, with my eyes I traced the line
Of the horizon, thin and fine.
Straight around til I was come
Back to where I started from;
And all I saw from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood.
Over these things I could not see;
These were the things that bounded me.*

- **Haystack Mountain, Liberty Maine** - A local favorite (and great for kids – features a children's book on signposts along the trail.
- **Giant's Stairs Trail (Bailey Island):** A dramatic hike over rocky cliffs created by ancient geology that drop steeply into the ocean, providing a unique "staircase" effect.
- **Hidden Valley Nature Center, Jefferson, Maine** - This 1,000-acre "hidden gem" features a **quaking bog** and specialized trails like the Crossbill Loop which



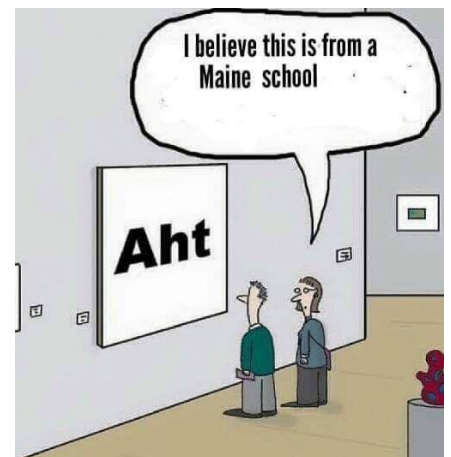
includes illustrated story panels for children

- **Cliff Trail, Harpswell, Maine** - This 2.1-mile loop is famous for its "**fairy house**" **building zones** where hikers are encouraged to create small structures from natural materials. It also features a dramatic 150-foot vertical cliff drop-off overlooking the Long Reach.
- **Boothbay Harbor Sculpture Trail**: As Maine's only walking sculpture trail, this walk features over two dozen sculptures located throughout the town
- **Ovens Mouth Preserve**: This site features 146 acres of scenic shoreline on two peninsulas, connected by a pedestrian bridge. It features dramatic tidal water that moves through a narrow passage, with a mix of easy and more strenuous, rugged terrain.

3. Visit a museum! (Great rainy-day activity)

- **The Maine Maritime Museum, Bath, Maine** sits on a beautiful 20-acre campus on the banks of the Kennebec River in "The City of Ships," Bath, Maine. The museum is dedicated to promoting an understanding and appreciation of Maine's maritime heritage and culture. Stroll through the country's only surviving shipyard to see where large wooden sailing vessels were built. Tour the Mary E, a beautiful wooden schooner. Take a cruise to see some of Maine's most iconic lighthouses from the water and get an up-close look at Navy vessels under construction at Bath Iron Works where the motto is "*Bath Built is Best Built.*"

- **Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine**, is a nationally recognized and celebrates Maine's role in American art, featuring a 16,000-piece collection focusing on artists who lived or worked there. The 20,000-square-foot campus includes the Wyeth Center (N.C., Andrew, and Jamie Wyeth), the Farnsworth Homestead, and the Olson House, a National Historic Landmark.

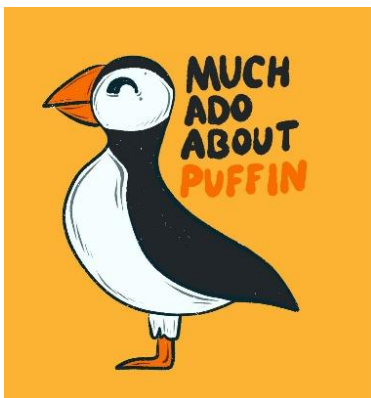


- **Owls Head Transportation Museum, Owls Head, Maine** - While a transportation museum, its uniqueness lies in that all of its massive collection of bicycles, engines, and airplanes still operate. Visit the iconic Owls Head Lighthouse 30-foot brick lighthouse that stands on a granite bluff and is a popular spot for photography and visiting the keeper's house.
- **Langlais Sculpture Garden, Cushing, Maine**: A collection of over 50 large-scale wooden sculptures by artist Bernard Langlais located in a rural setting.

4. **Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, Boothbay, Maine** deserves its own entry. It's a unique combination of 300+ acres of stunning, diverse gardens with dramatic, rocky Maine coastal waterfront. The most famous, must-see attraction is the Guardians of the Seeds, a collection of giant, whimsical wooden troll sculptures hidden throughout the forested trails. The Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens are open seasonally from May through October, and host a popular "Gardens Aglow" light display in the winter

5. Get out on the water!

- **Cap'n Fish's Puffin Tour, Boothbay Harbor, Maine** - Maine is the only state in the US where wild puffins nest, so if you would like to see these adorable fuzzy birds for yourself, now is your chance! Of course, you might also see some other Maine marine wildlife during your scenic sea cruise, such as seals, whales, and blue heron, to name a few, in addition to a few historic Maine lighthouses you'll pass on the way out to the island where they nest.

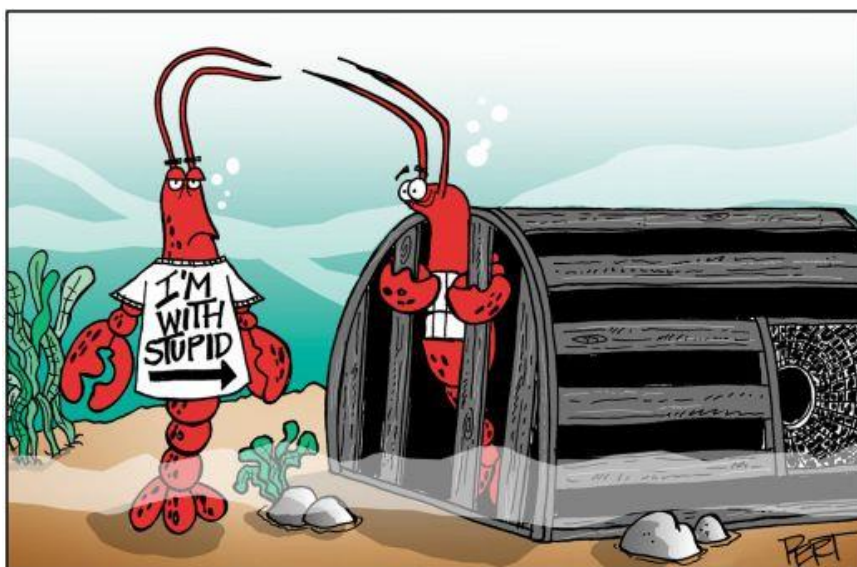


- **Day Sails and Sunset Cruises on a Schooner, Camden, Maine** -Schooner boats are widely considered a "**must-do**" highlight for visitors to the Maine coast. Trips provide panoramic views of Curtis Island Light, Mount Battie, and coastal mansions that are otherwise inaccessible. Passengers frequently spot harbor seals, bald eagles, ospreys, and occasionally porpoises or whales. Many schooners allow passengers to help hoist the sails or even take a turn at the wooden helm. You sail on meticulously restored vessels, some over 100 years old, while crew members share local history and maritime lore.
 - **Squirrel Island Mail Boat, Boothbay Harbor, Maine** - This is a one-hour trip on the **NOVELTY** which is the Squirrel Island Mailboat. There may be several short stops to pick up and drop off Islanders in addition to the regular stop at Squirrel Island. On this narrated sightseeing cruise, you will see: Nature: the sights and sounds of sea life and sea breezes, gentle waves and some fog now and then. The busy harbor: lobster boats, yachts, sailing boats and even an occasional cruise ship. The working waterfront: shipyards, fishing piers, coast guard station, marinas, oceanographic research lab, the scenic shore: lighthouses, rocky cliffs and many islands.
6. **Visit Colonial Pemaquid** -A living museum with reenactors who demonstrate colonial-era trades like blacksmithing, rope-making, and fish processing A National

Historic Landmark in Maine, it is special as a crucial, early 17th-century European fishing and trading site that predates many famous New England colonies. It features a 1908 reconstruction of the 1692 Fort William Henry—perhaps New England's first stone fort—alongside deep archaeological sites, a museum with thousands of artifacts, and ruins of a 17th-century village overlooking the scenic Pemaquid River.

7. **Rent a kayak** - offering access to scenic, protected waters like Muscongus Bay, the Damariscotta River, and Pemaquid Harbor and Penobscot Bay. Maine is renowned for island-dotted and sheltered paddling. Paddlers frequently see seals and bald eagles, especially in the calmer bays. “When is the best time of day to kayak?” Try getting on the water early in the morning or around sunset. Not only does this make for incredible views, but the Midcoast breezes are calmer, which makes for easier paddling. No Experience Necessary! There are numerous places to rent kayaks along the coast, and some will even deliver to your vacation home!

8. **Enjoy a traditional clambake.** The premier, traditional clambake in Midcoast



Maine is Cabbage Island Clambake in Boothbay Harbor. This experience includes a scenic boat ride on the *Bennie Alice* to the island for a, classic meal of lobster, clams, corn, and blueberry cake. Or visit one of

the many lobster shacks for an authentic experience. Shaw’s in New Harbor, Five Islands Lobster Co., and McAloon’s Lobster Shack. Insider Tip: Sprague’s Lobster (located just across the street from world-famous Red’s in Wiscasset) offers an excellent alternative with similar, high-quality offerings without the hours-long line.

9. **Visit a lighthouse**

- **Marshall Point** in Port Clyde, featured in *Forest Gump*. (easy access without fees unless you visit the museum, which you should)

- **Owl's Head in Owl's Head** Often considered one of Maine's most romantic and haunted lighthouses, it is famous for the story of Spot, a keeper's dog who famously rang the fog bell with his teeth to save ships.



And in 1850, the keeper discovered a couple found frozen—but alive—on a wrecked schooner below the cliff. They were revived in the lighthouse and later married

- **Rockland Breakwater** - A 7/8-mile (one-way) trek directly into the ocean, offering panoramic views of Penobscot Bay, sailboats, and local seabirds.

- **Pemaquid in Bristol** The lighthouse sits bedrock that slopes into the ocean, creating a dramatic, photogenic landscape often called a "rock-strewn wonderland".

10. Shopping beyond Moose tee shirts, lobster keychains or balsam pillows -

Visit **Elmer's Barn** in Bristol, a massive barn filled with eclectic antiques and oddities, or the **Maine State Prison Showroom** in Thomaston for crafts made by inmates. **Perry's Nut House** in Belfast, Maine, is a charming, nostalgic Route 1 roadside attraction operating since 1927. It is beloved for its quirky "cabinets of curiosities" (stuffed animals like Ape-raham the gorilla, a 21-foot python skin, and a white elephant). It's famous for homemade fudge and various nuts. It perfectly blends old-school Maine souvenir shopping with eclectic, kitschy charm.

11. **Renys**, (17 locations along the coast) gets its own entry. This is a Maine-based department store chain founded in 1949, and is considered charming because it offers a nostalgic, old-school shopping experience often described as a "Maine adventure". It combines the feel of a classic mercantile store with a diverse, ever-changing inventory of high-quality goods at discounted prices. Shoppers enjoy navigating the packed, well-organized aisles to discover unexpected, high-quality items—ranging from name-brand clothing like Carhartt to Maine-made food products and unique home goods. Many locations, such as the one in Bath, retain a nostalgic charm with features like wooden staircases and a welcoming, bustling

downtown feel. The stores are deeply connected to Maine culture, offering local products and serving as a staple in local communities.

12. Fat Tire Biking in Jefferson - Hidden Valley is 1,000 acres of protected land, with a wide variety of habitat, including over a mile of shorefront on Little Dyer Pond. An extensive network of trails, managed by the Midcoast Conservancy, offers access to quiet bogs, ponds, mixed forests, and unique habitats. Over 30 miles of different trails include several easy trails with gravel and crushed stone. Other moderate to advanced trails are on dirt and forest floors. Fat Tire mountain biking is a great way to explore nearly all of the trails. Bring your own bikes or rent one on weekends at the Center

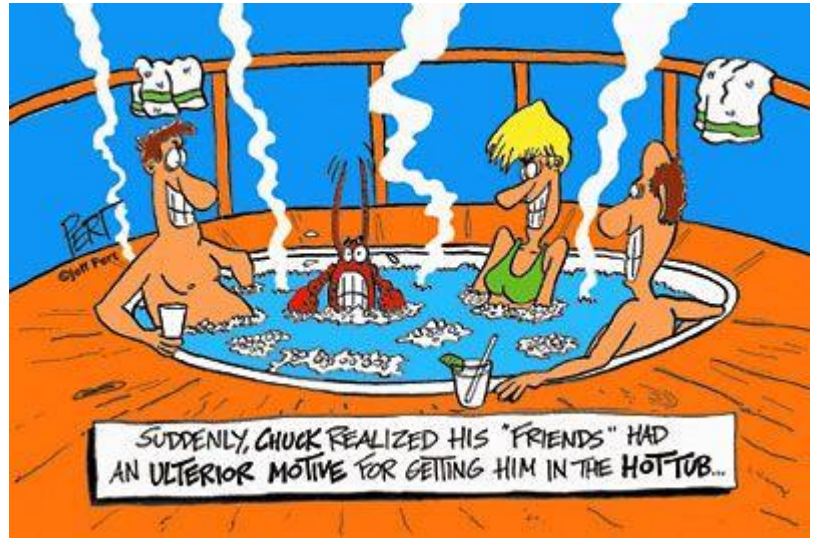
13. Enjoy a beach day - The best thing about **Reid State Park** is its rare, long, and wide sandy beaches—Mile and Half Mile—combined with dramatic, rocky Maine coastline, offering both large surf for swimming/surfing and a sheltered tidal lagoon perfect for children. It is a stunning, relatively uncrowded natural oasis in Midcoast Maine. The best thing about **Popham Beach State Park** is its stunning, dynamic landscape, featuring a long stretch of sandy beach where you can walk out to Fox Island during low tide. The ability to explore tidal pools during low tide is a major highlight. **Birch Point Beach State Park**, which is located near Owls Head Lighthouse, the



lengthy Rockland Breakwater Light (also worth a visit!), remains one of our favorite hidden gems. Birch Point is one of the least-frequent Midcoast Maine beaches near Boothbay Harbor, but that's a vital part of its allure. The state park itself has several scenic hiking trails, unique geologic rock formations, nearby lobster fishing vessels, and a calming ambiance that you won't find at many other dog-friendly beaches in Maine. The best thing about Pemaquid Beach in Bristol, Maine, is its combination of rare, soft, shimmering white sand and pristine, well-maintained facilities. It is exceptionally family-friendly, featuring calm, clean water and a convenient snack shack, making it a standout, clean, and picturesque spot compared to rocky Maine coastal areas. The best thing about **Lincolnton Beach** is its combination of a scenic, accessible sandy shore directly on Route 1 with stunning views of Penobscot Bay and Islesboro. It is highly valued for being a family-friendly spot that features free parking, nearby restaurants, and a ferry terminal, making it a convenient coastal stop.

14. 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.

15. Visit Aldemere Farm, Rockport - a renowned 136-acre working saltwater farm and educational center celebrated as the oldest continually operated breeder of Belted Galloway cattle ("Oreo cookie cows") in the United States. While functioning as a working farm, it offers visitors, including tourists and locals, opportunities for hiking, birdwatching, and enjoying the pastoral scenery. The farm also operates a birthing center and provides opportunities to see calves, especially in the spring, making it a major attraction for the region.

16. The Langlais Art Preserve, Cushing. The former homestead of Maine-born artist Bernard Langlais and his wife Helen Friend Langlais. Dotting the landscape are more than a dozen of Langlais's large-scale wooden sculptures, remnants of the expansive outdoor art environment he created here from 1966 to 1977. A 1/4-mile ADA-accessible path provides a route through the art environment, and the 2 1/2-mile Woodland Trail traverses the forest beyond.