

Southern Maine – Lobster Rolls and Coastal Strolls

Southern Maine is primarily defined as the coastal region encompassing York and Cumberland counties, stretching from the New Hampshire border up to the Greater Portland area. It is known for its sandy beaches, high tourism, and role as the state's economic hub.

1. **Portland Head Light, Cape Elizabeth**- Commissioned by George Washington, it is most distinguished as the oldest lighthouse in Maine, originally completed in 1791. It is widely considered one of the most iconic and frequently photographed lighthouses in the United States due to its dramatic setting on a rocky promontory in Cape Elizabeth. It is situated within the 90-acre Fort Williams Park, which offers hiking trails, picnic areas, and historic military fortifications.
2. **Goddard Mansion – Cape Elizabeth** – While you are in Fort Williams Park, take some time to explore Goddard Mansion. a striking, ivy-covered stone ruin built in 1858 that features Italianate architecture designed by Charles A. Alexander. Its significance lies in its "decadent decay," offering a picturesque, haunting backdrop for photographers near Portland Head Light and a unique glimpse into 19th-century history.
3. **Spring Point Ledge Light, South Portland** - Unlike many offshore lighthouses, visitors can walk directly to the lighthouse along the breakwater, often called the "Spring Point Shoreway". *Kids love this!* The lighthouse was commissioned after many ships ran aground on the treacherous ledge it protects. The breakwater is part of the scenic waterfront area near the historic Fort Preble.
4. **Casco Bay Lines Mailboat Run, Portland** - For a view of the harbor from the water side,

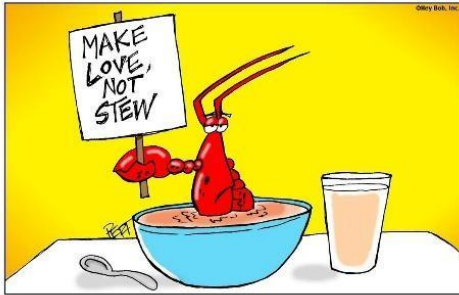


take a run around the islands while the ferry drops off mail. A great trip on a hot day, you can even bring your own picnic lunch with beer or wine. You can get off on any island of your choice but be sure to track the ferry schedule so you do not miss the last boat back or you will have to call a water taxi. Keep your eye out for seals and other wildlife – and watch the lobstermen hauling traps.

5. **Sunset and Full Moon Paddles on the Scarborough Salt Marsh, Scarborough** - Sunrises get all the hype since Maine is the first in the nation to See the sun every day, see the sun every day, but when a sunset is seen from the water, with all the colors multiplied by the water's reflection, well that's the kind of sight that makes you stop mid-paddle to stare in wonder. During a sunset or full moon canoe tour on the Scarborough Marsh, you'll get a sunset (and maybe a

moon rise) on the water, in a canoe in a beautifully scenic spot filled with wildlife with an expert guide who can name all the birds and fish. You don't have to wait for sunset; you can paddle the marsh anytime – renting the Maine Audubon's canoes or with your own.

6. **Lucky Catch Lobster, Portland** -Have you ever wondered about the journey of a lobster from the bottom of the ocean to the top of a plate? With Lucky Catch Cruises you can watch every step of the process and eat the lobster when you're done. Lucky Catch Cruises will take you on a boat ride with real fishermen to bait, catch, trap and haul sea critters from the deep. Under their careful instruction, you can get your hands dirty like you're part of the crew.



7. **Wiggly Bridge, York** - Not many York area visitors choose to stray from direct paths to the coastline, but a noteworthy (and *bounce-worthy*) Maine attraction awaits for those who opt for a scenic alternative. At the end of State Route 103 you'll encounter Wiggly Bridge, possibly the smallest suspension bridge in the world. The wooden deck spans just 75 feet, bouncing and flexing as you cross from one tiny tower to the next — perfect for energetic kids (or kids-at-heart!).
8. **The Old Port, Portland** -If you like the thought of strolling near the waterfront and wandering down old wharfs, or strolling down cobblestone streets, check out the Old Port. It's one of the biggest tourist attractions in Portland, and it'll offer an entertaining day trip for visitors of all ages. Activities at the Old Port range from scenic seal watches to a beer connoisseur's delight in beer gardens. (And check out Maine Foodie Tours for tours that are centered around specific foods, themes, locations and events. For example, the "Old Port Lunchtime Lobster Crawl" will leave your fingers permanently covered in butter after you've cracked open the most delicious lobster tails in the area. Also, the "India Street Food Artisans" will keep your taste buds ablaze from the spices of the east. <https://www.mainedayventures.com/>) In the Old Port, you can eat, drink, shop or just people-watch along the harbor.
9. **Mackworth Island, Falmouth** - Mackworth Island, one of the many islands in Casco Bay, but accessible by a causeway, is worth a visit. The 1.25 mile trail that encircles the island takes about an hour to complete at a leisurely pace and visitors are treated to stunning views of Casco Bay and Portland. Along the way, stop to watch boats and ferries motor through the Atlantic waters while seagulls, osprey and shorebirds glide overhead as they search for food. The best part for children is that there is a fairy forest inside. Children are encouraged to build a home for a fairy using natural elements found along the walk – pinecones, seashells, driftwood, etc. It may be designed for children, but adults always enjoy building a house or two as well!

10. **Perkins Cove, Ogunquit** - Perkins Cove is a lively, postcard-perfect fishing village turned artist colony on the south end of Ogunquit. From glimpses of the town's maritime past to bustling shops and restaurants, this charming spot—one of the most photographed corners of Maine is a great place to spend an afternoon. Wander around the narrow streets and visit some fantastic jewelry and gift boutiques, art galleries, clothing shops and numerous restaurants.

Then, take a walk along **Marginal Way**. Walking along the Marginal Way is like braving a tightrope over the windy cliffs that border the Atlantic, but in the best and most beautiful way possible. Named for the literal margin of trail that is pressed between land and sea, Marginal Way features 1.25 miles of winding trail with stunning views overlooking the town of Ogunquit and the rollicking waves of the Atlantic. Leaving Perkins Cove with its candy shops and working fishing dock on one end of Marginal Way walk to the three miles of sandy dunes that make up Ogunquit Beach. The walk is not particularly difficult, with a small bit of elevation change, and there are benches placed periodically along the way for those who need a rest or wish to stop and enjoy some of the many views.

“What happens to me when I cross the Piscataqua and plunge rapidly into Maine... I do not ordinarily spy a partridge in a pear tree... but I do have the sensation of having received a gift from a true love.” EB White

11. **Enjoy a beach day!** Southern Maine has so many to choose from! What kind of vibe are you looking for? Old Orchard Beach has Seven Miles of Sandy Beach: A long,



stretching, sandy beach ideal for swimming, walking, and playing, which feels different from the rocky coast typically found in Maine.

Palace Playland: Located right on the beach, this is the only oceanfront amusement park in New England, featuring over 30 rides and a large arcade. **The Old Orchard Beach Pier:** The centerpiece of the town, extending over the ocean with restaurants, shops, and live entertainment. It's

known for its lively and bustling atmosphere, including a lively nightlife scene and a variety of oceanfront food vendors. Parking is easy to find in OOB, with plenty of paid lots, though patient drivers can spot free on-street options on side streets! **Kennebunkport Beaches**

has three distinct beaches. Gooch's Beach: The largest, known for excellent surfing, soft sand, and ample space for sunbathing at low tide. **Middle Beach:** A quieter, rockier stretch perfect for beachcombing and relaxing to the sound of the ocean. **Mother's Beach:** A small, protected cove with calm waters and a playground, ideal for families with young children. At low tide, the beaches reveal rock pools teeming with sea creatures like crabs and starfish. Permits required from June 15th to September 15th, costing \$25 daily or \$100 weekly.

Colony Beach (Kennebunkport): Generally, does not require a parking pass, though parking is very limited. Ogunquit Beach is special for its stunning, 3-mile stretch of soft white sand, gentle surf, and unique peninsular geography nestled between the Atlantic Ocean and the tidal Ogunquit River. Often ranked among the best in the US, it offers dramatic low-tide expanses, scenic sand dunes, and adjacent access to the popular 1.25-mile rocky coastal walk, the Marginal Way. You can park at **Ogunquit Beach**, but it fills up very early (often by 9–10 a.m.) during peak summer season. Key options include the main Beach Street lot, **Footbridge Beach**, and **North Beach**. Parking is paid (\$8+/hr or daily rates) and best managed via the Passport or Park Mobile app. **Crescent Beach State Park** in Cape Elizabeth is known for its mile-long, crescent-shaped shoreline that features some of the finest white, soft sand in Maine. Unlike the rugged, rocky coasts typical of the region, this park offers a classic saltwater beach experience with gentle surf and relatively warm waters, making it exceptionally family-friendly for swimming and sunbathing. The park is well-equipped with ample parking, a seasonal snack bar, and a bathhouse featuring flush toilets and cold-water showers. Shaded picnic areas with tables and grills are tucked away in wooded sections and behind the dunes. The park charges a daily admission fee of \$6 for Maine residents and \$8 for non-residents (ages 12–65). Kids under 12 are generally free, while seniors (65+) are free with a Maine resident sticker.

12. **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 Southern Maine.

- **Wolfe's Neck Woods State Park,** Freeport - This park features five miles of easy trails that wind through a mix of woodland and estuary. The White Pines Trail is a particularly accessible option, offering crushed gravel paths with stellar views of Casco Bay and frequent osprey sightings.
- **Parsons Way, Kennebunkport** – A scenic 1.9-mile coastal walk along the road with a dedicated sidewalk. It provides constant views of the Atlantic, with benches placed on rocky outcroppings for resting.
- **Timber Point, Biddeford** - An easy 1.4-mile wheelchair-accessible loop that leads through the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge. At low tide, you can walk across to Timber Island, but sturdy, non-slip shoes are recommended for the rocky crossing.



- **Cascade Falls Trail, Saco** - A short, easy wooded hike leading to a 20-foot tiered waterfall. It is well known for its fairy village where visitors are encouraged to build tiny houses from fallen natural materials.
- **Winnick Woods, Cape Elizabeth** - Part of a larger greenbelt system, this 2.8-mile easy trail includes boardwalks over ponds and paths through dense forest
- **East Point Sanctuary, Biddeford Pool**: A flat, scenic walk known for birding and rocky shores
- **Saco Heath, Saco**: A unique 1-mile boardwalk through a peat bog

13. Visit a museum! (Great rainy-day activity) The Portland Museum of Art, Portland - is renowned as a premier regional museum, featuring a 22,000+ piece collection heavily focused on Maine-inspired art, American, and European masterpieces. It is uniquely distinguished by its downtown campus—three architecturally distinct, interconnected buildings—and its stewardship of the Winslow Homer Studio.

The Wedding Cake House, Kennebunk, is a renowned 1825 historic home famous for its intricate, white Gothic trim that resembles icing, earning it the title of Maine's most photographed home. Originally built by shipbuilder George W. Bourne, it is celebrated for its elaborate architecture and local lore, often serving as a premier tourist attraction.

Victoria Mansion, Portland - a premier pre-Civil War villa, recognized as one of the finest and most intact 19th-century residential architectures in the U.S.. It is special for retaining over 90% of its original, lavish interiors and furnishings designed by Gustave Herter, alongside advanced 1850s technology like gas lighting and plumbing.

14. Rent a bike and hit the Eastern Trail - The Eastern Trail is the primary large, partially paved multi-use trail in southern Maine, spanning roughly 22–65 miles (depending on developed sections) between Kittery and South Portland. It features paved sections, such as the 5.6-mile Greenbelt Walkway in South Portland, which passes through wetlands and scenic coastal areas like Bug Light Park. You can rent bikes near the South Portland Greenbelt Walkway through Lighthouse Bikes in South Portland, which offers cruisers, hybrid, and electric bikes.



15. Explore Reny's – it's a Maine Adventure, Saco – If Reny's doesn't have it, you don't need it! Reny's is famous for selling a little bit of everything. Shoppers can find high-quality brands like Carhartt, Columbia, Timberland, and Smartwool, Maine products, alongside household essentials, toys (Lego), gourmet food, and closeout items. It is a favorite spot for finding bargains, often featuring closeouts, overruns, and factory seconds from big brands

16. Take a food or beer tour, Portland - Greater Portland is a foodie's dream

Concentrated Food Scene: The city has one restaurant for every 200 residents, providing a variety of high-end and casual options within a compact, walkable area.

National Accolades: Greater Portland, Maine, is a powerhouse for James Beard Awards, frequently producing winners and numerous finalists, particularly in the Best Chef: Northeast and baking categories. Known as a premier culinary destination, Portland chefs and bakers—such as those from ZU Bakery, Norimoto Bakery, and Fore Street—are consistently honored.

Greater Portland, Maine, is a highly decorated, top-tier craft beer destination, frequently winning national and international awards. The area is heavily recognized for its exceptional breweries, particularly Allagash Brewing Company, which has won numerous Gold Medals and Brewery of the Year honors at the Great American Beer Festival.

Highest Brewery Density: Portland consistently ranks among the top cities in the U.S. for breweries per capita. Some studies place it at #1 with roughly 18 breweries per 50,000 residents.



A google search will give you several options to choose from.

*Insider tip- A self-designed beer tour. The Maine brewing icon, Allagash Brewing, is at the heart of an excellent little brewery walking tour of its own. If you trek on over to Industrial Way off of Interstate 85 and Forest Ave., you'll find Allagash Brewing, home of the infamous Allagash White. But, not only will you find Allagash, literally within footsteps, there are four other craft breweries to visit! Seriously, all five breweries are either across the street or right next door to each other. Aside from Allagash, you can easily saunter to Austin Street Brewery, Battery Steele Brewing, Foundation Brewing, and Definitive Brewing. **Be sure to designate a sober driver.***

17. Take a self-guided lighthouse tour. (six in one day!), Greater Portland

- **Spring Point Ledge Light, South Portland**, – Located on Southern Maine Community College Campus, this lighthouse features a long breakwater jutting out to the sea. There are also the ruins for Fort Preble to explore right here.
- **Bug Light, South Portland** – Located less than ¼ mile from Spring Point Light, this is a charmer. Located in Bug Light Park, this is a great photo opportunity - Portland's skyline, the ferry and lobster boats and the harbor.
- **Portland Head Light, Fort Williams Park, Cape Elizabeth** – This is Portland's oldest lighthouse, and it is said to be the most photographed spot east of the Mississippi.

We don't know if that is true, but it is iconic. There is a museum and gift shop, a true piece of history.

- Just offshore is **Ram Island Light** at the entrance to the harbor.
- **East Light, Cape Elizabeth** (active) Known for *The Lighthouse at Two Lights* by Edward Hopper, Known it features a stark, sunny depiction of the tower and keeper's house, the painting is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- **West Light, Cape Elizabeth** (now a private home) Located at the end of Two Lights Road, this area also features Two Lights State Park, the Lobster Shack at Two Lights restaurant, and dramatic rocky shoreline views.

By now, you may be ready for a treat, Check out **The Lobster Shack at Two Lights**.



It is special primarily for its dramatic location perched on the rugged cliffs of Cape Elizabeth. A local landmark since the 1920s, it offers a quintessential Maine dining experience where you can eat fresh seafood on picnic tables just above the crashing surf. The Lobster Shack has a prize-winning lobster roll and other popular menu items include full-belly fried clams, clam chowder, and traditional Maine desserts like whoopie pies and strawberry rhubarb pie.

18. **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.