

# MAGNIFICENT MAINE



*The land of lobsters and lighthouses has activities and landscapes for every taste*



BY PAUL E. KANDARIAN

What's there to do in Maine?  
Where do you want to start?

How about the coast: Maine, the biggest of the six New England states with a total area as large as the other five combined, has 5,500 miles of coastline, from sandy shores to craggy cliffs, and about 2,000 islands. Here, lobster is king; Maine produces almost 90 percent of all lobster devoured in the United States and the sweet crustacean shows up on nearly every menu in the state.

Inland waters? Whitewater rafting, kayaking, canoeing and fishing are in abundance in a state with a combined 32,000 miles of rivers and streams, equal to the total lengths of the Mississippi, Amazon, Yangtze and Nile rivers.

Camping, hiking and biking more to your liking? Maine has more than half a million acres of state and national parks, including the 92-mile Allagash Wilderness Waterway and a mile-high mountain, Mount Katahdin.

And if you prefer the great indoors, head to Portland, a city with vibrant food, arts and cultural scenes. Gaining entry

to all of it is easy, with two international airports and the newly expanded Amtrak Downeaster from Boston to Portland, Freeport and Brunswick. From these points, you can catch the Maine Eastern Railroad up the coast to Bath, Wicasset and Rockland.

"We have this magnificent coastline from beaches to dramatic rocky shores, numerous islands, mountain vistas, sparkling lakes, vast landscapes and miles of rivers and streams," says Carolann Ouellette, director of the Maine Office of Tourism. "You can connect with a wide variety of arts and cultural offerings, dine on fresh seafood and local products prepared by award-winning chefs, and shop in everything from outlet stores to small galleries."

Families flock to Maine in summer for outdoor experiences, including at Three Rivers Whitewater, a resort with access to the Kennebec, Penobscot and Dead rivers for all manner of water adventures—from easygoing paddles to muscle-burning rapids.

"One of our most popular [options] for families is a two-day trip, on an inflatable

**Clockwise from top: View of Mount Katahdin from Sandy Spring Pond. Portland Harbor. Whitewater rafting at Three Rivers Whitewater. Sebago Lake, site of the Duck House. Wooden pier at Old Orchard Beach. Harvest on the Harbor.**





Portland Convention and Visitors Bureau



Portland Convention and Visitors Bureau



Three Rivers Whitewater







**Clockwise: Catching some rays at the Old Orchard Beach. Frenchmen's Hole, a popular swimming spot. The picturesque Artist's Covered Bridge, built in 1872, has a reputation for being the most painted bridge in the state.**

raft one day, then whitewater rafting the next," says Judith Hutchinson, reservation specialist for Three Rivers Whitewater. "It includes camping, campfire cooking, all gear brought in for you and everything a family needs. It's really a fantastic bonding experience; it sets the tone for a lot of summertime memories."

Feeling even more adventurous? Try their "Jump and Raft"—a tandem

multiple-day cruises aboard the Grace Bailey and Mercantile, both National Historic Landmarks that carry 29 passengers; and the Mistress, which carries six. The trips leave from Camden, and take you to tiny fishing villages, islands and lighthouses, where you'll see whales, seals and puffins up close, with rates from \$475.

Hit the cooling ocean waters at popular spots like Ogunquit Beach,

"Best Mountain Park" by *Yankee Magazine*. There is a nine-hole flying-disc golf course, a new bungee trampoline to supplement its existing zip line tours, scenic lift rides, geocaching adventures, wildlife encounters, mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking, ATV tours, fishing and many other outdoor activities (check the resort website for pricing).

Stays of choice at Sunday River include the Jordan Grand Resort Hotel, close to the resort's golf course, and Grand Summit Resort Hotel, close to lifts and mountain bike trails.

Nearby are lots of free activities, including dips in old-fashioned swimming holes in the mountains of western Maine. Popular ones include Frenchman's Hole, the Letter S Pool and the Artist's Covered Bridge. Sunday River's hiking trails are free as well, and nearby state parks offer opportunities for hikes—from easy loops to multiday backpacking journeys.

For the urban adventurer, Portland is a city of contrasts, with Victorian neighborhoods on cobblestone streets to

*Hit the cooling ocean waters at popular spots like Ogunquit Beach, a favorite for families; Old Orchard Beach, a seven-mile stretch of sand centered by the fabled Old Orchard Pier; and Scarborough Beach State Park, one of the best in the state.*

skydive jump followed by a one-day river raft adventure, which Hutchinson says is one of the company's "most popular offerings."

With Maine Windjammer Cruises, you can sit back and let others do the work—or join in yourself, if you'd like. The cruise line offers

a favorite for families; Old Orchard Beach, a seven-mile stretch of sand centered by the fabled Old Orchard Pier; and Scarborough Beach State Park, one of the best in the state.

Sunday River Resort in Bethel is a ski resort in winter and a hotbed of family fun in summer; it was voted





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## NOT-TO-MISS LIGHTHOUSES

*Maine has an abundance of iconic lighthouses, ever-flashing beacons of light that guide vessels in stormy ocean waters. Maine resident Alan Claude, noted lighthouse poster artist, recommends five must-sees for visitors.*

- 1. Cape Neddick Light, York:** Also known as “The Nubble,” this spectacular lighthouse is planted on a small rocky island. One of the state’s most popular lighthouses, it’s separated from shore by a 100-foot channel.
- 2. Portland Head Light, Cape Elizabeth:** A majestic beauty, this light house perches on a rocky promontory at Fort Williams Park. Built in 1791, it is the state’s oldest lighthouse. The park and picturesque lighthouse attract about a million visitors a year.
- 3. Doubling Point Light, Arrowsic:** This little-known but utterly charming wooden octagonal lighthouse on the Kennebec River was one of four built in 1898 to provide

navigational aid for ships on the way to Bath, a city with four centuries of ship-building history.

- 4. Pemaquid Point Light, Bristol:** This classic white pyramid lighthouse, built in 1835, has the distinction of being the first sentinel in Maine to be automated when the keeper position was eliminated in 1934. Climb to the top and check out the Fresnel lens, which flashes every six seconds and is visible for 14 nautical miles.
- 5. Rockland Breakwater Light, Rockland:** Sitting at the tip of a nearly mile-long jetty, this lighthouse is surrounded by sea, hillsides, ships and lots of fresh Maine air, through which cuts a fog-horn blast every 15 seconds.



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Kelly Woods

## SUMMER FESTIVALS

*You can't swing a lobster in Maine without hitting a festival; each summer the state celebrates everything from soft drinks to crafts to blueberries to, of course, lobsters.*

★ **The Moxie Festival (July 12–14):** An ode to the Maine-made soft drink, this festival in Lisbon Falls includes a native American powwow, parade, 5K race, car show, river race and more, all in honor of a soda that became the state's official soft drink in 2005. ([www.moxiefestival.com](http://www.moxiefestival.com))

★ **The Maine Lobster Festival (July 31–Aug. 4):** This festival honors the lobster with five days of feasting and fun on the midcoast, featuring a sea goddess coronation, parade, entertainment, an international lobster crate race, cooking contests and, oh yes, 20,000 pounds of lobster. ([www.mainelobsterfestival.com](http://www.mainelobsterfestival.com))

★ **The Machias Blueberry Festival (Aug. 16–18):** Machias is a town of 2,500 that swells to 25,000 for the festival, which celebrates the blueberry in a state that produces nearly 85 percent of the world's supply. Partake aplenty in all things blueberry, including a blueberry musical, blueberry pie-eating contest and blueberry farm tours. ([www.machiasblueberry.com](http://www.machiasblueberry.com))

For a complete list of festivals, go to [www.visitmaine.com](http://www.visitmaine.com)

world-class theater, dining and culture. Stay at the recently renovated Portland Regency Hotel and hit the city sites.

Last fall, the Portland Museum of Art opened its Winslow Homer Studio in Prouts Neck, a renovated and preserved studio lauded as one of the most significant locations in the history of American art, where Homer lived and painted many of his masterpieces. Also check out SPACE Gallery in the heart of Portland's arts district, with 10 exhibitions and more than 200 events each year, including live music, documentary and indie films, visual arts, lectures and more.

Music lovers enthuse over the Portland Symphony Orchestra, the largest performing arts group in Maine, which offers a variety of performances—from pops to Mozart—in the 1,900-seat Merrill Auditorium, as well as outdoor shows. Portland Stage puts on seven shows a season, which play to more than 50,000 people annually, and has a theater workshop for kids in summer as well.

The city's food scene has grown tremendously in the last few years, and is today recognized by national and international culinary experts. Dry Dock Restaurant & Tavern is hot with tourists and locals, made famous by author/fisherwoman Linda Greenlaw (of *The Perfect Storm* fame); the harbor-side eatery offers great food to match the view.

A good way to check out the food scene is with Maine Foodie Tours in Portland, which includes tours by foot or trolley, and a "bike-and-brew" tour of five lighthouses in the area, and then three breweries by shuttle.

And be sure to check out the state's rich nautical history at the Maine Maritime Museum, which contains exhibits and artifacts, a historic shipyard with five original 19th-century buildings, and New England's largest sculpture—a full-size representation of the largest wooden sailing vessel ever built, the *Wyoming*.

For those in the family who love to shop, don't miss a visit to the



Moxie Festival Committee





Tickets go fast for the Portland Sea Dogs, Double-A affiliate of the Boston Red Sox.

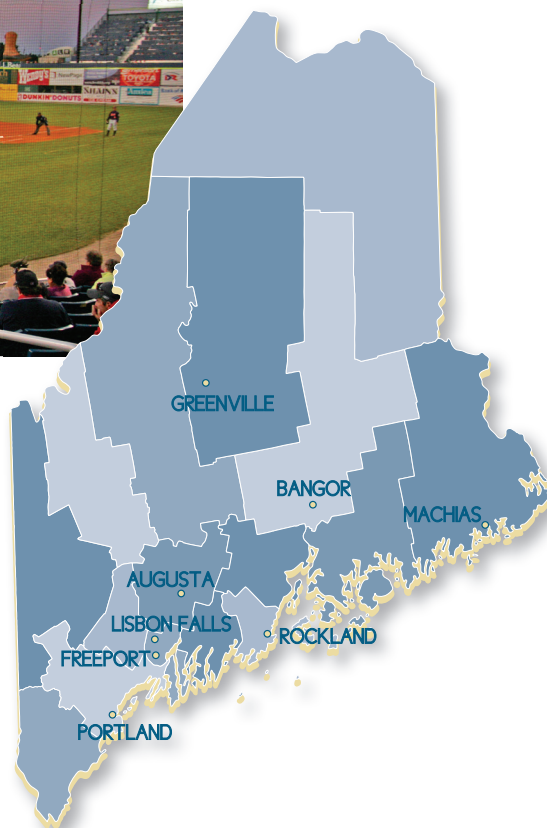
original L.L. Bean Outlet, located just 20 minutes north of Portland in Freeport. The company's flagship store, located on Main Street for nearly a century, is open seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The gigantic duck boot sculpture that sits out front makes the store impossible to miss.

Baseball fans will want to take in a Portland Sea Dogs game while they're in town. The popular Double-A affiliate of the Boston Red Sox makes its home at Hadlock Field, which features the

"Maine Monster" out in left field—a replica of Fenway Park's Green Monster. (Don't wait until the last minute to get tickets—they go fast.)

In Maine, "the possibilities are as varied and unique as the state itself," says Ouellette of a state whose license plates bear the word "Vacationland."

"It's a place where you can truly follow your own inner compass." ■



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