Cape Breton is an island off the Atlantic coast that is part of the province of Nova Scotia. In addition to spectacular coastal landscapes, you will discover a vibrant culture shaped by the traditions and heritage of the Mi’kmaq, Acadian and Gaelic people who have been sharing this land for hundreds of years. Explore magnificent beaches, the superb Cabot Trail, Cape Breton Highlands National Park and quaint coastal villages. During your Matitimes road trip, you will have plenty of opportunities to enjoy seafood freshly caught by local fishermen. Lobster season starts in early May.
WHAT TO DO

**INVERNESS BEACH**

Inverness municipal beach is the perfect family beach with warm and shallow waters and beautiful, soft sand. It’s also a magnificent place to stop and admire the view! Stroll along the 1.5-km of wooden boardwalk and take in the sea air while enjoying scenic views of the ocean and the golf course. Be sure to grab an ice cream at the canteen. The beach is supervised in July and August. Parking is available at the end of the road.

158, BEACH ROAD #1, INVERNESS
902-258-3740
WWW.NOVASCOTIA.COM/SEE-DO/OUTDOOR-ACTIVITIES/INVERNESS-BEACH/1707

**CABOT TRAIL**

The Cabot Trail is at the top of any list of things to do in Nova Scotia. With its hairpin bends, steep sea cliffs, beautiful beaches and brightly coloured landscapes, this extraordinary 300-km scenic road is one of the most beautiful in the world. One-third of the Cabot Trail runs through Cape Breton Highlands National Park and for picturesque views, it is one of the most visited regions in Canada. Its striking beauty will leave you breathless. Take the time to relax and enjoy the many scenic look-offs and attractions along your way.

A BIT OF HISTORY...

The first inhabitants of Cape Breton were the ancestors of the Mi’kmaq people, who have lived in this region for ten thousand years. Today the island has 5 First Nations communities.

John Cabot is said to have reached the shores of Cape Breton in 1497, becoming the first European explorer to visit present-day Canada. This historic discovery is commemorated in the name of the famous Cabot Trail.

Several European nations then laid claim to the island, which changed hands more than once between the French and English during the long struggle for control of the North American empire.

Cape Breton Island experienced an influx of Highland Scots in the early 19th century. A sizeable majority of Cape Breton’s population is of Scottish descent.
DE CHÉTICAMP À INGONISH

CHÉTICAMP
Chéticamp is an Acadian community. In this small town of lobster, crab and halibut fishermen, the locals speak French with a strong local accent. You will discover a warm people with their own music, dances, songs and age-old traditions. A stroll along the waterfront is a great way to get a feel for the place. And be sure to admire Chéticamp’s world renowned hooked rugs!

Les Trois Pignons Cultural Centre and Museum
Learn about the culture and history of the Acadians of Chéticamp, and admire the stunning collection of hooked rugs for which the village is famous. The most popular are those of local artist Élizabeth Lefort (1914-2005), which depict local landscapes, historical and religious scenes and celebrity portraits. Open May-October from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., July-August until 6:30 p.m.
15584, CABOT TRAIL, CHÉTICAMP
902-224-2642
WWW.LESTROISPIGNONS.COM

LUXURY PICNIC!
A lobster dinner on the beach is an enjoyable and typical Cape Breton experience. If possible, boil your lobsters in a large pot of sea water, or cook them directly over the fire. Crack them open and enjoy, just as the sun is slipping over the horizon... Unforgettable!

Parks Canada offers an all-inclusive lobster boil package with a guide who will teach you about these fascinating creatures while preparing your meal. In addition to the lobster, enjoy a salad of mixed greens and freshly-baked rolls, along with tea and cookies. This option is available on Wednesday and Sunday evenings from late June to early September. Registration is required before 4 p.m. at a Visitor Centre or by calling 902-224-2306. Visit the website for more information:
www.pc.gc.ca/fr/pn-np/nscbreton/activ/interp/homard-lobster

Another interesting option is to order a picnic for pick-up. Three eateries offer this service in Chéticamp and Ingonish. You can consult the menus online:
www.pc.gc.ca/fr/pn-np/nscbreton/activ/piquenique-picnic

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WHITE POINT, CAPE BRETON

© Tourisme SagLac, Yves Ouellet
CHÉTICAMP
CABOT TRAIL

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WHITE POINT, CAPE BRETON

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CABOT TRAIL

© Nova_scotia_cabot_trail_j, WikiCommons, chensiyuan
CABOT TRAIL
CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDS NATIONAL PARK ★★

The park entrance is just past Chéticamp. A park pass is required to tour this section of the Cabot Trail. Numerous look-offs provide ample opportunities to admire the striking beauty of the ocean and mountain landscapes, and each has a different story to tell. There is a Visitor Centre in Chéticamp and another in Ingonish. The trail can be explored in either direction.

HIKING

The 26 hiking trails in Cape Breton Highlands National Park offer different levels of difficulty and a variety of landscapes, allowing you to explore the complex habitat of northern Cape Breton Island. The trails below are listed in order of location from Chéticamp to Ingonish and Cape Smokey. Visit the website for a complete list and descriptions of all 26 trails: www.pc.gc.ca/fr/pn-np/ns/cbreton/activ/randonnee-hiking

• CAP ROUGE ★★:
  Distance (round-trip): 9 km
  Time (round-trip): 2 to 3 hours
  Level: Easy
  Elevation gain: 40 to 110 m

  9 km hike, rated easy, along the route of the old Cabot Trail. Leaves from Trout Brook and climbs gently, offering views of the Atlantic along the entire length. Traces of Acadian history abound, with the remains of an old school, former residents’ houses and an old wharf. The final look-off offers spectacular views and an exhibit on the families who used to live here. Nice place for a picnic. About 2-3 hours.

• SKYLINE★★:
  Distance (round-trip): 6.5 km
  Time (round-trip): 2 to 3 hours
  Level: Easy
  Elevation gain: 290 to 405 m

This easy 6.5 km hike will give you an eagle’s view of the Cabot Trail with dramatic rugged coastal landscapes. The view of the sunset from the headland cliff at the end of the trail is a unique experience you won’t soon forget. One of the most beautiful hikes in the park. About 2-3 hours.

• BENJIE’S LAKE:
  Distance (round-trip): 3 km
  Time (round-trip): 1 to 1.5 hours
  Level: Easy
  Elevation gain: 400 m

  This flat 3 km round-trip hike crosses wet barrens and evergreen forests ending at a small lake. Boardwalks in some sections. Moose are frequently seen. About 1 hour.

• CORNEY BROOKE (RIVIÈRE À LAZARE):
  Distance (round-trip): 6.5 km
  Time (round-trip): 2 hours
  Level: Easy
  Elevation gain: 30 to 170 m

Easy 6.5 km hike along a meandering brook through a hardwood forest to a small waterfall. Keep a watch out for wildlife – you may spot a variety of birds or maybe even a snowshoe hare or a moose. About 2 hours.

Season: The park is open from May to October, with full services available in July and August. The Cabot Trail is open year-round.

Visitors Centres:
The Chéticamp Visitor Centre (16648 Cabot Trail, Chéticamp) and Ingonish Visitor Centre (37639 Cabot Trail, Ingonish) are open daily from mid-May until the end of October, in spring and fall from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and in summer from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Entrance fee: $7.90/adult/day and free for youth aged 17 and under.

www.pc.gc.ca/fr/pn-np/ns/cbreton
Hiking

DESTINATIONS

LONE SHIELING:
Distance (round-trip): 0.6 km
Time (round-trip): 15 minutes
Level: Easy
Elevation gain: 70 m

Short easy hike (600 m) in the Grande Anse Valley with its 350-year-old sugar maple trees. This is a protected area. A replica of a Scottish crofter’s hut is found at the beginning of the trail. Take the time to discover its history and keep an eye out for wildlife – moose like it here too.

GREEN COVE:
Distance (round-trip): 0.2 km
Time (round-trip): 10 minutes
Level: Easy
Elevation gain: 10 m

Don’t miss this easy 200 m trail that will only take you 10 minutes. It leads to a rocky granite headland jutting out into the sea, where you can watch the ocean crash against the rocks. Notice how the plants have adapted to this windy, salt-sprayed coastal environment.

FRANEY:
Distance (round-trip): 7.4 km
Time (round-trip): 2 to 3 hours
Level: Difficult
Elevation gain: 95 to 430 m

A difficult 7.4 km trail, but the magnificent view where the mountains meet the sea is your reward. The trailhead is on the fire access road just north of the Clyburn River, in the western section of the park. Bring a picnic to eat at the top. About 2-3 hours round-trip (loop).

MIDDLE HEAD:
Distance (round-trip): 3.8 km
Time (round-trip): 1 to 2 hours
Level: Intermediate
Elevation gain: 5 to 45 m

This moderate-level 3.8 km trail follows a long, narrow peninsula separating two ocean bays, ending on headland cliffs overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, Cape Smokey and Ingonish Island. There are opportunities to see seabirds, seals, whales and eagles. Nice place for a picnic. About 1 to 2 hours.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF!

10-trails-in-one-day challenge! It’s easy to do if you’re a good walker and choose short hikes. Bring a list with a photo of yourself on each trail to the Visitor Centre to earn a prize.


Recommendations: Use a walking stick, stay on trails to protect fragile vegetation, do not approach wild animals, take all your litter with you, bring enough water and insect repellent. Note that mobile reception is unreliable in the park.
BETWEEN MOUNTAIN AND SEA
SWIMMING
Cape Breton Highlands National Park is home to many beautiful beaches. Those on the west coast let you swim in the calmer waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, while on the east coast beaches you can go for a dip in the salty Atlantic Ocean. You may spot whales or bald eagles. You will have plenty of opportunities for an open-air picnic!

- La Bloc Beach:
  This pebbly beach invites you for a refreshing swim. The wharf reaching into the warm gulf waters reminds us of the Acadians who once lived nearby on the west coast of the park. Enjoy a walk along the coast while admiring the sunset. Pit toilets and a picnic area on site. (17825, Cabot Trail, Highlands of Cap-Breton National Park)

- Black Brook Beach ★:
  One of the most popular beaches in the park, offering both saltwater and freshwater in the same location with lovely ocean views. The beach is bordered by a gentle waterfall on one end and intersected by a freshwater brook. Washrooms, change rooms, kitchen shelter, playground and picnic area on site. (33637, Cabot Trail, Highlands of Cap-Breton National Park)

- Neil’s Harbour Beach ★:
  Situated in the northeast corner of the park, in the village of Neil’s Harbour, this sandy beach is a real haven of peace. This is also where John Cabot is said to have come ashore in 1497. Take the time to walk to the Neil’s Brook estuary, and be sure to have an ice cream cone at the nearby lighthouse on Lighthouse Road. (Neil’s Harbour)

- Ingonish Beach and Freshwater Lake ★:
  Here you can choose between swimming in warm Freshwater Lake or in the salty Atlantic Ocean, separated by a barachois. Services on site: washrooms, change rooms, playground, picnic area, tennis courts, canteen and lifeguards at the saltwater beach in July and August.

- North Bay Beach:
  If you are looking for a quieter, more secluded beach experience, you will appreciate this long sandy beach on the Atlantic Ocean. It is also a habitat for many species of birds. Pit toilets and picnic area on site. (37123, Cabot Trail, Ingonish)

- Broad Cove Beach:
  This sandy beach is on the Atlantic Ocean. You can swim in the Atlantic and rinse off in the neighbouring brook near Broad Cove campground. Washrooms available at the campground. (251, Broad Cove Campground road, Ingonish)

- Warren Lake:
  Enjoy a swim in the warm waters of the largest lake in the park, surrounded by incredible mountain scenery. You have a good chance of seeing and hearing loons. Pit toilets and picnic area on site. (325, Warren Lake Road, Ingonish).
PLEASANT BAY
Pleasant Bay is known as the whale-watching capital of Cape Breton. It is also a paradise for nature lovers. Take a walk along the harbour, watch the sea birds soar, the fishermen hard at work, breathe in the salt air... And of course, it's the perfect place to take a whale-watching tour. Go out on a zodiac with Captain Mark, sailing directly from the Pleasant Bay wharf, or enjoy a kayak tour in St. Ann’s Bay with a qualified guide.

CAPT MARK'S WHALE & SEAL CRUISE
126, HARBOUR ROAD, PLEASANT BAY
902-224-1316
WWW.WHALEANDSEALCRUISE.COM

NORTH RIVER KAYAK TOURS
644, MURRAY ROAD, NORTH RIVER
902-929-2628
WWW.NORTHRIVERKAYAK.COM

MEAT COVE ★
Going off the beaten track can lead to beautiful discoveries! Meat Cove is another magnificent village worth visiting, offering spectacular ocean views. Situated at the extreme north of Inverness County, this fishing community can be reached from Capstick (after Bay St Lawrence) via an 8-km dirt road.

INGONISH
Situated on the Cabot Trail, at the edge of Cape Breton Highlands National Park, Ingonish is actually a cluster of five small communities covering an area of just 16 km. There are three main centres of activity: Ingonish Ferry in the south, Ingonish Harbour, and the beach. The area offers several nice hikes and a number of pleasant sites for swimming and activities on or in the water, be it saltwater or freshwater, with a multitude of lakes, ponds and rivers and, of course, the ocean (see Swimming and Hiking in the park). Be sure to go admire the view on Cape Smokey.

BAY ST LAWRENCE ★★
The snug little fishing village of Bay St Lawrence is well worth a stop, both for its unspoiled landscapes and its people. Many families have been in the area for more than five generations. You will also notice the village’s Scottish Gaelic heritage.
GAELIC COLLEGE ★
Founded in 1938, The Gaelic College (Colaiste na Gàidhlig) offers courses in traditional Scottish disciplines such as singing, music, dancing and crafts. It is dedicated to the study and preservation of the Gaelic language, arts and culture. Visit the museum and discover the fascinating history of the Scottish settlers and their traditions that live on here on the island. Don’t miss the cultural demonstrations for a real immersion in the Gaelic culture. The museum is open from mid-May to mid-October, Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
51779, CABOT TRAIL, ST ANN’S
902-295-3411
WWW.GAELICCOLLEGE.EDU

BADDECK ★
Situated about 60 km from Igonish, Baddeck is an important tourist hub on the Cabot Trail. Take the time to visit this charming village on the shore of beautiful Bras-d’Or Lake. Baddeck is also known as the site of the summer home of Alexander Graham Bell, the famous inventor of the telephone.

LAC BRAS D’OR ★
Bras d’Or Lake is an inland sea that cuts Cape Breton Island in half and is linked to the ocean by two deep channels, Great Bras d’Or and Little Bras d’Or. In the past, Mi’kmaq lived along its shores. This vast body of partially fresh/salt water was designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2011. You can drive around the lake and enjoy the views by taking the roads identified as Bras d’Or Lake Scenic Drive.

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE ★★★
Alexander Graham Bell built a summer home in Baddeck in 1886, spending more and more time there until his death in 1922. This remarkable museum tells the story of the world-famous inventor who was also greatly interested in aviation. In fact, the museum houses a full-scale replica of his famous aircraft, the Silver Dart, that made the first powered flight in Canada in 1909.

The «White Glove Tour» provides a behind-the-scenes look at the Bell collection and the chance to handle some of the great inventor’s photos and mementos, including his walking stick and notebook. Children can play games, fly kites and try scientific experiments. Open every day from mid-May to late October, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
559, CHEBUCTO STREET, BADDECK
902-295-2069
WWW.PC.GC.CA/FR/LHN-NHS/NS/GRAHAMBELL
NEARBY

FORTRESS OF LOUISBOURG ★★★
Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site, a reconstruction of the fortified French town before being taken by the British in 1748, will captivate the whole family. You will see high walls and heavy doors, houses and gardens, and characters in period costume who bring the town to life, recreating daily activities from 300 years ago. Restaurant and picnic table on site. Open daily from mid-May to mid-October, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the rest of the year Monday-Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
58, WOLFE STREET, LOUISBOURG
902-733-3552
WWW.PC.GC.CA/FR/LHN-NHS/NS/LOUISBOURG

MINERS MUSEUM OF GLACE BAY ★★★
Situated in Glace Bay, the Cape Breton Miners Museum pays tribute to the region’s long and rich history of coal mining. Take an underground tour of a coal mine located beneath the museum building, with a retired miner guide. You will learn all about the geological development of Cape Breton’s coal field and the different types of mines and mining techniques. You are sure to be moved by the stories of the miners and their families. On some evenings you can attend a concert by a well-known Cape Breton choir of coal miners, The Men of the Deeps. Open daily from mid-May to mid-October, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (until 7 p.m. on concert evenings). By reservation the rest of the year.
17, MUSEUM STREET, GLACE BAY
902-849-4522
WWW.MINERSMUSEUM.COM

★ Noteworthy  ★★ Worth the detour  ★★★ Must see
WHERE TO EAT

INVERNESS

PANORAMA RESTAURANT ($$$$)
If you fancy some fine dining before a superb panorama, reserve a table here. It’s a culinary destination not to be missed with a magnificent view of the ocean and the golf course. The sunset is particularly stunning. It also serves delicious breakfasts, either à la carte or buffet style. You will appreciate this restaurant if your budget allows. Open for breakfast from 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. and for dinner from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Reservations recommended.
18, CABOT LANE, INVERNESS
902-258-4653
WWW.CABOTLINKS.COM/RESORT/DINING/PANORAMA-RESTAURANT

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DESTINATIONS

©iStock-495737682, bjmc
FISHING BOAT ON THE CABOT TRAIL

© Authentic Canada. Simion Lemay
CAPE BRETON BY MOTORHOME
CHÉTICAMP
FROG POND CAFE ($)  
This is the perfect place for a good cup of coffee and a bite to eat. The place is small, but charming and friendly. You can sit indoors or outdoors on the wooden deck at the edge of the frog pond. Treat yourself to a good cappuccino, espresso, Chai tea or other beverage and a delicious homemade pastry. Next door you will find a small, interesting art gallery to visit that showcases the work of Cape Breton artists. Open from late May to October, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
15856, CABOT TRAIL, CHÉTICAMP  
902-224-2119  
WWW.SUNSETARTGALLERY.CA/  
FROG-POND-CAFE/

LE GABRIEL RESTAURANT AND LODGE ($$-$$$$)  
Le Gabriel offers a menu of classic Acadian fare, as well as some North American specialties such as steak, seafood and sandwiches. This popular restaurant stands out with its lighthouse-shaped entrance. The interior is spacious and the dining room is next to a lounge with pool tables and live music most Saturday evenings. Open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
15424, CABOT TRAIL, CHÉTICAMP  
902-224-3685  
WWW.LEGABRIEL.COM

PLEASANT BAY
THE RUSTY ANCHOR ($$-$$$$)  
Located halfway along the Cabot Trail, this laid-back seafood restaurant is popular with both tourists and locals alike. The patio overlooks Pleasant Bay and offers a lovely view during your meal. You can even use the binoculars provided to watch the whales swim in the bay. The menu focuses on locally caught seafood. The Lobster Rolls, ranked among the best on the island by National Geographic, are a must-try. Open daily from May to October, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and until 10 p.m. in July-August.  
23197, CABOT TRAIL, PLEASANT BAY  
902-224-1313  
WWW.OTHERUSTYANCHORRESTAURANT.COM

INGONISH
COASTAL RESTAURANT & PUB ($$-$$$$)  
The popularity of this pub is based on good service and a selection of fresh home-cooked dishes, such as the famous Ringer Burger which has an excellent reputation, as well as a wide variety of seafood, wraps and sandwiches. Located in the centre of Ingonish, the restaurant has spacious parking and a family atmosphere. You can eat indoors or outdoors on the patio. Some summer evenings you can also enjoy live local music. Open May-October from noon to 8 p.m. and until 2 a.m. on Saturdays. Also serves breakfast in July and August from 8 a.m.  
36404, CABOT TRAIL, INGONISH  
902-285-2526

BADDECK
BADDECK LOBSTER SUPPERS ($$-$$$$)  
Located by the edge of the ocean, this popular neighborhood restaurant features locally caught lobster, salmon, crab and more. The staff are friendly, the atmosphere is pleasant and the seafood is at its best. As a bonus, you will have a beautiful view of the harbour. Opens at 4 p.m. daily from June-October.  
17, ROSS STREET, BADDECK  
902-295-3307  
WWW.BADDECKLOBSTERSUPPERS.CA

NORTH SYDNEY
BLACK SPOON BISTRO ($$$-$$$$)  
Black Spoon Bistro is one of the area’s favorite restaurants with inventive cuisine and excellent service in a sophisticated décor. The Canadian menu includes soups and sandwiches for lunch, as well as a selection of pasta, salads, meat dishes and seafood for dinner. Above all, save room for dessert, you won’t regret it! Open Monday-Thursday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Friday-Saturday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. No reservations possible during the summer season.  
320, COMMERCIAL STREET, NORTH SYDNEY / 902-241-3300  
WWW.BLACKSPOON.CA

THE LOBSTER POUND AND MOORE ($$-$$$$)  
Another popular place to eat is the Lobster Pound And Moore. The menu changes with the availability of local seafood and produce, your guarantee of freshness. The portions are said to be enormous. The restaurant’s décor is both rustic and sophisticated. Although the place is often busy, the atmosphere is relaxed and pleasant. Open Wednesday-Friday from noon to 2:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
293, COMMERCIAL STREET, NORTH SYDNEY  
902-794-2992

BADDECK LOBSTER SUPPERS  
(902-295-3307)

Lobster Rolls

FORTRESS OF LOUISBOURG WITH THE FAMILY

SUNSET ON A LIGHTHOUSE

$ Inexpensive  $ Moderate  $$$ Upscale  $$$$ Fine dining