

CAPE BRETON



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.

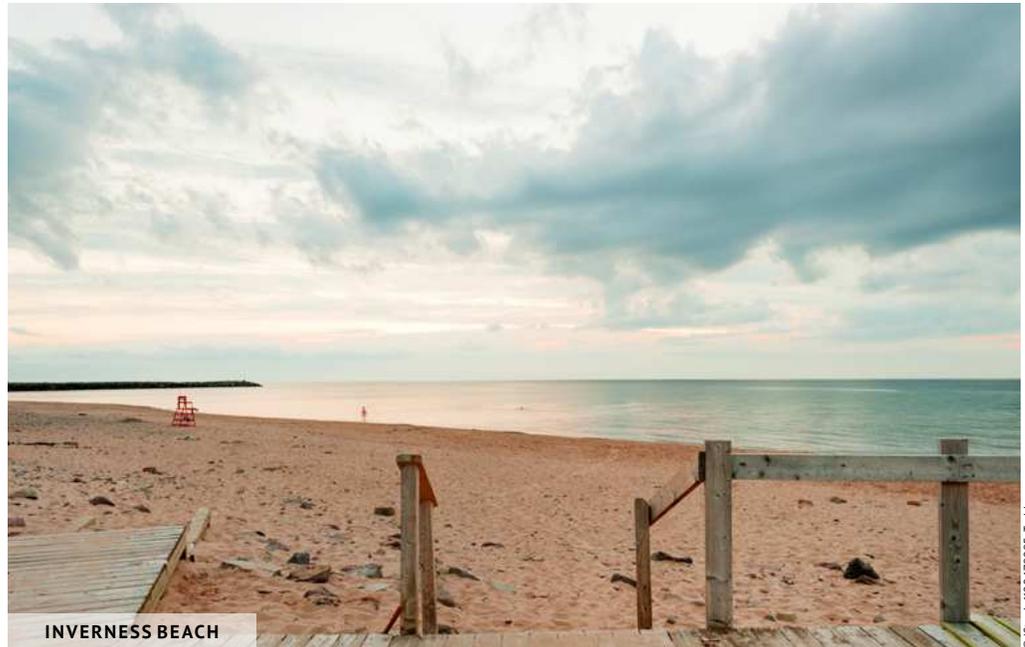
CABOT TRAIL, CAPE BRETON

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.

NOVASCOTIA.COM/SEE-DO/OUTDOOR-ACTIVITIES/INVERNESS-BEACH/1707



INVERNESS BEACH

© iStock-1130478985, Tashka

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.



VIEW OF THE CABOT TRAIL

© iStock-622054022, rachelmgrath

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.



Family

★ Noteworthy ★★ Worth the detour ★★★ Must see

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.
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. 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/ns/cbreton/activ/piquenie-picnic



© Tourisme SagLac, Yves Ouellet

CHÉTICAMP



© iStock-622054022, rehelmeigrath

WHITE POINT, CAPE BRETON



© 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**.

• CORNEY BROOKE (RIVIÈRE À LAZARE) :

Distance (round-trip): 6.5 km
Time (round-trip): 2 hours
Level: Easy
Elevation gain: 30 to 170 m



SKYLINE TRAIL

© Authentik Canada, Simon Lemay

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**.

• 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

© iStock-8932083, Photawa

CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDS NATIONAL PARK ★★

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).

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

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.

• FRANNEY : 
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.

Suggested short trails: Le Buttereau, Bog, Benjie's Lake, MacIntosh Brook, Lone Sheiling, Jack Pine, Green Cove, Broad Cove Mountain, Freshwater Lake, Freshwater Lake Look-Off.

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.



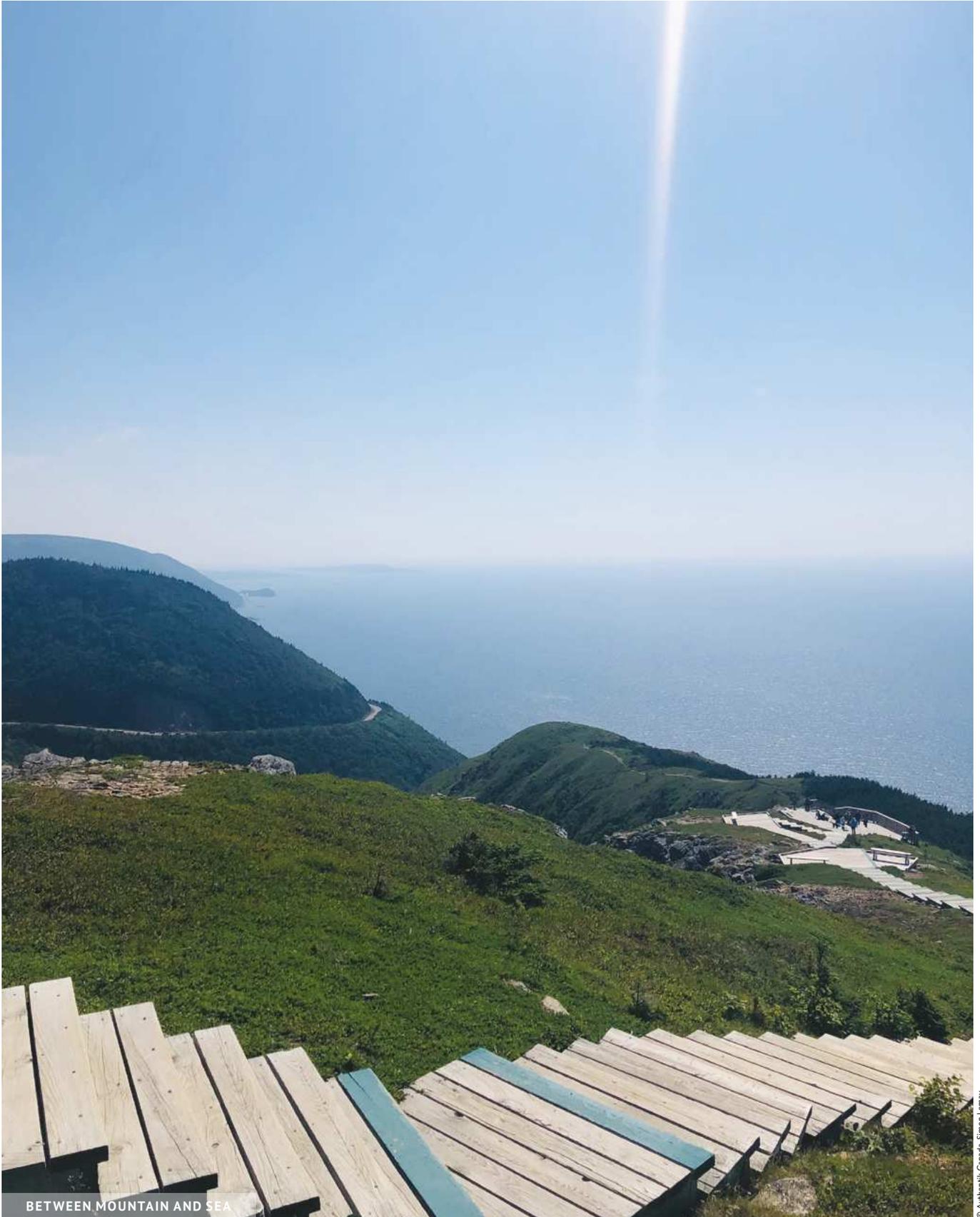
MONT FRANNEY

© AdobeStock 151180480, Lucie



TIME FOR A BREAK!

© iStock-612267546, PetrovVladim



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).



SUNRISE ON THE BEACH

© iStock-878405652, Jun Zhang



WARREN LAKE

© iStock-519355036, pchou



PEBBLY BEACH

© iStock-4719393708, lightphoto

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**.
WHALEANDSEALCRUISE.COM

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.

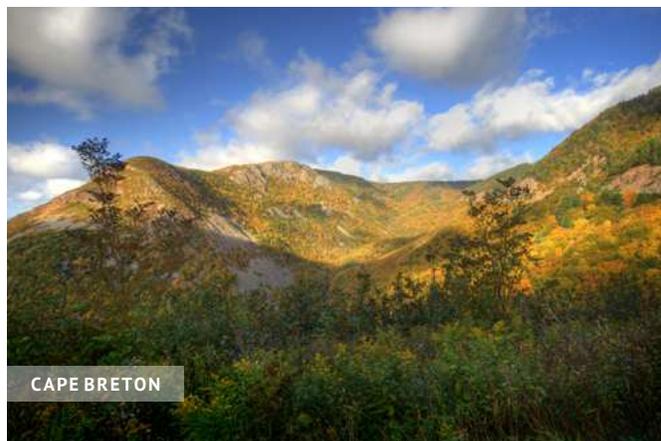
MEAT COVE ★

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**.



CAPE BRETON

© iStockPhoto, Phil Sjaanesen



MEAT COVE

© iStock-652834848, jimfeng



NEIL'S HARBOUR

© iStock-891026838, karenfoleyphotography

GAELIC COLLEGE ★

Founded in 1938, **The Gaelic College** (Colaisde 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-June to early GaelicCollege.edu

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**.

PC.GC.CA/FR/LHN-NHS/NS/GRAHAMBELL



© Tourisme Sag.Lac, Yves Ouellet

GAELIC COLLEGE

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.



© iStock-692465842, Adrian Wojcik

BRAS D'OR LAKE

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,

© iStock-922791352, DorelDillon



ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

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.

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**. By reservation the rest of the year.

MINERSMUSEUM.COM



© iStock-458108539_sshaw75



© Authentik Canada, Simon Lemay

FORTRESS OF LOUISBOURG



FISHING BOAT ON THE CABOT TRAIL

© iStock-4957682_bjmc



CAPE BRETON BY MOTORHOME

© Authentik Canada, Simon Lemay

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. Reservations recommended.

CABOTLINKS.COM/RESORT/DINING/PANORAMA-RESTAURANT

CHÉTICAMP

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.

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.

THERUSTYANCHORRESTAURANT.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.

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.

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!

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.



SUNSET ON A LIGHTHOUSE

© iStock-157399185, shiyest7



FORTRESS OF LOUISBOURG WITH THE FAMILY

© Authentik Canada, Simon Lemay