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# PORT EXPLORER

# Bar Harbor

MAINE, U.S.A.

**GENERAL INFORMATION** Bar Harbor is the commercial and tourist center for Mount Desert Island and Acadia National Park. Surrounded by mountains, forest, lakes and ocean, this resort town was once the summer playground for wealthy and famous Americans. While most of Bar Harbor's grand mansions and cottages were destroyed in a fire that devastated the island in 1947, many of the surviving estates have been converted to quaint hotels, bed and breakfast inns, and restaurants. The unique charm of the city is further enhanced with a number of local shops, galleries and specialty boutiques offering an unusual and distinctive range of items.

Bar Harbor is also home to the prestigious Jackson Laboratory, a leading genetics research center, and the College of the Atlantic, a small liberal arts college offering a variety of summer educational programs for the public. As an added attraction to the summer season, Bar Harbor's calendar of events includes a number of fairs, art shows, and music festivals.

While Bar Harbor is a charming tourist attraction on its own, for most visitors, the town serves as a gateway to visit the scenic wonders of Acadia National Park. The unparalleled splendor of the mountains, coastline, and forest make this the second most visited park in the U.S. with over 4 million visitors a year.

The park's main attraction is Park Loop Road, a 27-mile two-lane thoroughfare that winds through the eastern half of Mount Desert Island. The shoreline section of the road is the most attractive offering splendid coastal views from Thunder Hole, Otter Cliff, and Sand Beach. The loop culminates with a drive to the summit of 1,530-foot Cadillac Mountain, the highest point on the North America's East Coast.

While Acadia National Park offers the visitor an array of activities and natural scenery, Bar Harbor is also famous as a departure point for a number of whale watching and sightseeing cruises. As whales migrate from the coast of Greenland to the Caribbean Sea, Bar Harbor and the coast of Maine are among the best whale watching sites in the world.

**HISTORY** Prior to the first European visit to Mount Desert Island in 1007 AD by the Vikings, the area was home to the Abnaki people. A quiet and peaceful community known as Man-es-ayd'ik, or “Clam gathering place”, the Abnaki people hunted, fished, and gathered shellfish.

It was not until 1604 that the first European explorer, Samuel De Champlain, arrived and claimed the L'Île des Monts Deserts (Mount Desert Island) for France. In 1713 the treaty of Utrecht gave control of the Island to the British, but it was not until the 1760's that settlers began to arrive into the Bar Harbor area.

The village was incorporated as the 107th town of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1796, and was given the name “Eden”. Maine became a State in 1820 and it was shortly thereafter that Bar Harbor began to garner a reputation as a “primitive” get-away for city dwellers from Boston and New York. For local residents however, the economy flourished on fishing, shipbuilding, lumbering and farming.

Mount Desert became a summer home to a number of artists in the 1840's, which in turn began to attract the more affluent class of people from the Eastern Seaboard. By the 1880's the social scene of the "summer colony"

*continued over*



matched that of Newport, Rhode Island and the local economy experienced a welcome boom. Magnificent summer homes and cottages were built by the Rockerfellers, Vanderbuilts, and Fords and for several years, the Boston Symphony Orchestra played entire summer seasons on the Village Green.

As the island continued to develop, a movement began by George Dorr, the “father of Acadia” to preserve the Islands natural beauty. Congress declared the preserved area Sieur De Monts National Monument which eventually was renamed in 1929 to Acadia National Park. In 1918 the town of Eden was officially changed to Bar Harbor.

The depression of the 1930’s, World War II, and a catastrophic fire in 1947 all took their toll on the super-rich and their mansions. Reborn as a more egalitarian destination, Bar Harbor and the Acadia National Park has once again become one of the most popular places on the New England Coast.

BAR HARBOR PLACES OF INTEREST

**Acadia National Park** is the second most visited park in the United States. Covering an area of over 35,000 acres, the park contains over a dozen glacier lakes, 17 mountain peaks, dramatic coastal scenery, and Somes Sound Fjord.

**Park Loop Road** is the most scenic road of Acadia National Park. The loop is accessible from three entrance points; Hulls Cove, Cadillac Mountain, and Stanley Brook.

**1 Hulls Cove Visitor Center** is one of three visitor centers in Acadia National Park. The building houses an auditorium, bookshop, information booth, and rest room.

**2 Thunder Hole** is a natural rock formation located on the coast of Acadia National Park. As wind sweeps tides through Thunder Hole’s granite channel, trapped air is forced up and out, making the thunderous sound for which it is named.

**3 Otter Cliff** is a scenic viewpoint located on the Park Loop Road.

**4 Wildwood Stables/Carriage Road Trails** were built by the Rockefeller family at the turn of the century. With over

50 miles of broken stone paths, the preservation of these trails has made exploring some of the most scenic areas of the park accessible to hikers, bikers, and horse drawn carriages.

**5 Jordon Pond House** is a scenic stop along the Park Loop trail with a beautiful panoramic view of the surrounding Penobscot Mountains and Bubbles Hill.

**6 Cadillac Mountain** is the highest point on the North Atlantic coast. On a clear day, you will have a 360-degree view of the whole of Acadia National Park and beyond that, much of Maine itself.

**7 Northwest Harbor** is the wealthiest residential area on Mount Desert Island. Among its highlights are the beautiful Asticou Gardens.

**8** Somesville is a quaint little village overlooking Somes Sound, the only fjord on the East Coast of the United States.

**SHORE EXCURSIONS** To make the most of your visit to Bar Harbor and its scenic surrounding areas we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, please be advised to take only necessary items and to secure any valuables onboard.

**LOCAL CUSTOMS** Local Cuisine: The Maine lobster is the most noted specialty of the area. Blueberries are also a local favorite and are harvested during the month of August and early September.

Drink Specialties: The area is home to a number of local breweries and microbreweries including the Atlantic Brewing Company, Bar Harbor Brewing Company, and the “Farm”.

Weather: Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park’s coastal location makes for an ever-changing weather pattern. High temperatures in September and October are usually in the 50s and 60s, but it can be cooler at higher altitudes. It is advisable to dress in layers and bring raingear with you on your travels.

Flora and Fauna: Acadia’s proximity to the Atlantic Ocean combined with the ravages of the great fire of 1947 make for a unique ecological environment. The forest is scattered with red and white spruce, balsam fir, white pine, paper birch, sugar maple, and quaking aspen. As summer turns to winter, the true colors of the magnificent fall foliage come alive with the golden yellow leaves of the birch and aspen, the sparkling red and orange of the maple, and the brilliant crimson of the blueberry bush. Intensified by the backdrop of the dark evergreens, the vibrant colors will leave an everlasting impressive.

Wildlife: Because hunting is prohibited on Mount Desert Island, the woods and waters are filled with wildlife. The white-tailed deer are plentiful but are usually in hiding during the day. Other animals include the eastern coyote, snowshoe hare, red fox, and

the beaver. The park also boasts over 300 species of sea, shore and land birds, including the common loon, bald eagle and the return of the native peregrine falcon. Some of the areas more popular ocean inhabitants include the harbor seal and a variety of whales including finback, humpback, and minke.

**SHOPPING FACILITIES** Most of Bar Harbor’s shops are located on Main Street and the three perpendicular streets that connect with it: West, Cottage, and Mount Desert Street. Here you will find a number of shops, galleries and specialty boutiques.

Items of interest include unique crafts, paintings, jewelry, pottery and heirlooms.

**LOCAL CURRENCY** The unit of currency is the U.S. Dollar. Bills are available in denominations of \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100. Coins are available in denominations of 1 cent, 5 cents, 10 cents, and 25 cents.

**POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES** The main Post Office is located at 55 Cottage Street.

There are a few public telephones available on the pier. American coins and calling cards are accepted in pay phones.

**TOURIST INFORMATION** The Tourist Information Office is located at 93 Cottage Street. There is also a tour information booth located on the ship’s tender pier.

**TRANSPORTATION** Local taxis will be available on the pier. It is recommended that a price is agreed upon with the taxi driver before leaving the pier.

