

Story Ideas for 2019

Ten Maine Downtowns are Part of National Main Street Program

Main Street Maine is part of the [National Main Street Program](#) in ten of Maine's historic downtowns: [Biddeford](#), [Saco](#), [Westbrook](#), [Brunswick](#), [Bath](#), [Rockland](#), [Belfast](#), [Gardiner](#), [Augusta](#) and [Skowhegan](#).

These Maine downtowns have charming 19th-century brick shopfronts, narrow, tree-lined streets and classic American architecture. They each have a story to tell that weaves a tale of yesterday and today.

- In [Belfast](#), the first thing you'll need if you're going to do some Main Street strolling is shoes. And what better place to get a new pair of kicks than the oldest shoe store in America? That would be [Colburn Shoe Store](#) on the actual Main Street in Belfast, established in 1832.
- In [Skowhegan](#), those new shoes will make a beeline to [The Bankery](#). The Bankery is an artisan bakery and cake shop that makes everything from scratch – inside a vintage bank building. They use locally sourced grains from the perfectly named [Maine Grains](#), as does nearby [Miller's Table Restaurant](#) and the [Bigelow Brewing Company](#).
- Don't miss the classic diners in [Saco](#), [Gardiner](#) and [Biddeford](#). And save room for the year-round farmers markets in Brunswick, Belfast and the historic freight shed in [Bath](#).
- At Fort Andross Mill in Brunswick, [Rough & Tumble](#) makes handbags and tote bags with names like Breeze, Gallery, Hobo Pack and Brunswick Bucket.
- The [Kennebec River](#) connects four of Maine's Main Streets – [Skowhegan](#), [Augusta](#), [Gardiner](#) and [Bath](#). Think river walks, summer concerts, picnics, bike trails and locally flavored events like the [Swine and Stein](#) in Gardiner.
- Historic theaters grace many Main Streets, including [The Strand Theater](#) in Rockland, [Johnson Hall](#) in Gardiner, [The Colonial](#) in Belfast, [Chocolate Church](#) in Bath, [City Theater](#) in Biddeford and [Strand Cinema](#) in Skowhegan.

Bike the Mountains and Trails in Maine

Maine's mountain biking trails range from civilized and sedate meanders to thrilling root-studded twists and turns.

- The most famous, and most urbane, routes are [Acadia National Park's historic carriage roads](#) where the beautifully sculpted "broken-stone" roads wind through 45 miles of scenic sections of the park. All those miles are car free.
- Maine's [state parks and public reserved lands](#) offer some rowdier fare. The Bigelow Preserve in western Maine covers a vast area including a mountain range, trails, ponds and streams. Bradbury Mountain State Park in Pownal is a long-time rider favorite close to Freeport and Portland. Camden Hills State Park offers lofty views of Maine's MidCoast.
- Local ski areas offer both thundering downhills and technical cross-country sections. [The Sunday River Ski Resort](#) in Newry offers 20 miles of lift-serviced terrain perfect for intermediate and advanced riders. Mountain bikers can start at the [Sugarloaf Outdoor Center](#) in Carrabassett Valley and link to a [broad network of trails](#) including those of [Maine Huts & Trails](#). Other ski centers open to mountain bikers include [Pineland Farms](#) in New Gloucester, the [Fort Kent Outdoor Center](#) and the [Nordic Heritage Center](#) in Presque Isle.
- [Trails.com](#) offers a list of the most popular mountain bike trails in the state. [The New England Mountain Bike Association \(NEMBA\)](#) also provides detailed information about Maine mountain biking routes.

Want to extend your biking season? Find yourself a fat bike and a snow-covered trail. These new cycles, with their huge tires, have brought biking into the winter and onto routes once reserved for skis and snowshoes. Some places to try it include the [Bethel Inn and Resort](#); [Pineland Farms](#); [The Sugarloaf Outdoor Center](#) and its neighbor, [Maine Huts & Trails](#); and [Carter's Cross Country Ski Centers](#).

The Many Ways to Experience Maine's Wild Blueberries

Maine is famous for its tiny, wild blueberries. These little blue flavor bombs are harvested from low-bush barrens across the state and have found their way into just about anything you can imagine – from delicious pies to spa treatments. Blueberries are best – wild in Maine!

- **Eat Your Berries**

[Stonewall Kitchen](#) is famous for their Wild Maine Blueberry Jam, perfect on their blueberry muffins and scones, and you can make any breakfast better with their Wild Maine Blueberry Syrup. [Nervous Nellie's](#) handmakes Wild Maine Blueberry Preserves on Deer Isle. Or try blueberry honey – gathered from barrens in Downeast Maine, [Swan's Honey](#) is unique and tangy. Or, spice up your dinner with blueberry salsa! The [Bar Harbor Jam](#) company combines the sweet berries with tomatoes, cilantro and jalapeños for something special. Blueberry pie can be found on the menu throughout the state, from local diners like [Moody's Diner](#) to fine dining establishments. And what's better than pie? Pie à la mode! Try Maine-made wild blueberry ice cream made by Gifford's with berries from Ellsworth or Gelato Fiasco's [Maine Wild Blueberry Crisp](#) flavor.

- **Drink Your Berries**

On a hot day, there's nothing better than a cool [Smashed Blueberry](#) ale from Shipyard Brewing, or a [Bar Harbor Blueberry Ale](#) from the Atlantic Brewing Co. How about a sweet Maine Blueberry Soda by the iconic [Maine Root](#)? You could make it into a float with some of that tasty blueberry ice cream! Or, warm up with a cup of blueberry tea. [Highland Organics](#) makes tea from both the berries and the leaves for a powerhouse blend of antioxidants! Or, sip something unique; try [Maine Mead Work's](#) HoneyMaker Blueberry Mead or a blueberry vodka from [Cold River Vodka](#). They take two Maine crops – potatoes and wild blueberries – and make their award-winning blueberry vodka.

- **Berries on Your Body**

If you can't get enough blueberries while in Maine, try a relaxing blueberry spa treatment like the [Blueberry Bliss Signature Facial](#) at the Spruce Point Inn.

Winter in Maine

When winter rolls in, Mainers don't hibernate. They get out and celebrate all the great things there are to do in Maine in winter. If you don't have your own gear, there are outdoor outfitters to set you up with a snowmobile and ski resorts who'll rent you skis and teach you the basics.

- [Skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing](#) – The options are endless, from small local hills to big mountain steeps and backcountry glades with Sunday River and Sugarloaf (home to snowboarder and Olympic Gold Medalist Seth Wescott) in the Western Mountains
- How many places can boast ski hills with ocean views? Welcome to the [Camden Snow Bowl](#), home to one of the world's best toboggan runs.
- A slower, but no less invigorating, way to explore Maine's winter wilderness is by cross-country ski or [snowshoe](#). Imagine gliding quietly through balsam-scented forests, feeling the sun's warmth reflecting off the snow on a sparkling winter day.
- [Snowmobiling](#) – Thanks to abundant snowfall and an extensive network of winter trails, one of the most popular winter activities in Maine is snowmobiling. More than 14,000 miles of groomed trails mean you can ride uninterrupted from one end of the state to the other. Trail towns from Bethel and Rangeley to Jackman, Greenville, Millinocket and Madawaska have gas stations, lunch stops, and local snowmobiling clubs that maintain the local trails.

Explore a Different Part of Maine with Land Trusts

One of the best things about Maine is that if you want to get away from it all – and from everyone – nature’s solitude is just around the corner. Beyond the numerous state parks, there are hundreds and even thousands of acres of wilderness that have been preserved in land trusts – where your next adventure could be just down the road or tucked away in a remote corner of the state.

There are more than 120 preserves in Maine open to the public and winter is the ideal time to explore these gems. If you want to hike, snowshoe or cross-country ski past some art, consider the [Roberts Farm Preserve](#) in Norway, Maine. With 165 acres and more than seven miles of trails to choose from, you can find yourself deep in the pine trees in no time. On the weekends, there’s a cozy warming hut and you can borrow snowshoes and cross-country ski equipment for free. The Western Foothills Land Trust has installed outdoor sculptures by Bernard Langlais along the trails, adding beauty to an already amazing experience. Afterwards, head to town and grab a pint and some homemade, locally sourced food at [Norway Brewing Company](#). Perhaps you’ll stroll down Main Street and visit the Main Street Gallery or pop in at the Frost Farm Gallery.

The [Maine Land Trust Network](#) is a program run by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and this resource is truly a Maine experience not to be missed – especially when the snow flies!

Maine is Calling All Yogis

Maine has so many creative ways to do yoga, from mountaintop mountain pose to *garudasana* with goats (that’s Sanskrit for eagle pose with goats). For some yoga-themed story ideas, read on about Maine’s inventive yoga.

- **Yoga on the Water:** [Portland Paddle](#) offers SUP yoga classes on Casco Bay, where everyone from total beginners to advanced yogis can experience the joy of being on the bay. [Koan Wellness](#) in York exclusively offers SUP yoga in York Harbor, where after a quick paddle out to the peaceful Barrell Mill Pond, you spend an hour doing on-the-water yoga. During the summer, yoga studios take to the many lakes throughout the state like [Forever Wild Yoga’s](#) Paddleboard Yoga Retreat on Rangeley Lake.
- **Yoga + Drinks:** Tributary Brewing Company in Kittery has a weekly class called [Poses and Pints](#), where they say to honor your body first and then your taste buds.
- **Yoga + Animals:** [Ashley Flowers Yoga](#) has goat yoga classes in the summer at Smiling Hill Farm. Afterward, you get to snuggle the goats. Maybe you only want to be *near* goats. Try goat yoga at [Sunflower Farm Creamery](#) right next to the goat pasture. Or, try shavasana on a horse. The [Coast of Maine House](#) has a yoga-with-horses retreat in Saco, where while astride a calm horse you can surrender to the moment.
- **Mountain Top Yoga:** [Yoga on York](#) has a class where you hike Mount Agamenticus and then do yoga at the top and [Pacha](#) offers a retreat with hiking and yoga in the western mountains.
- **Weird Yoga:** [Tula](#) has aerial flow yoga classes where you are part yogi, part aerialist. The aerial yoga classes use a silk hammock to help deepen your poses and make you look pretty cool, plus they’re great for beginners.

Boating in Maine

From yachts to Sunfish, on lakes or the sea, boating is a truly quintessential New England experience. With thousands of miles of coastline and hundreds of inland lakes, those interested in checking out the boating lifestyle can spend a day on the water by renting at one of the many marinas throughout the state. Both [Yarmouth Boat Yard](#) in Yarmouth and [Moose Landing Marina](#) in Naples offer rentals and equipment and [Fore Points Marina](#) will be opening in Portland spring of 2019.

Bringing your own boat? In addition to the marinas, there are hundreds of [boat launches](#) throughout the state and the Maine Bureau of Parks and Land has a complete list of hand-carry, trailer-ramp or landing facilities, and offers a map to show you how to find them.