

Maine Story Ideas and News for 2025

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Hiring a [Registered Maine Guide](#) can help you make the most of your outdoor experiences. An expert can help you see a moose, climb a granite face or raft down a river full of rapids. Maine's unique guides are specially trained and registered with the state and offer leadership, help and advice in hunting, fishing, sea kayaking and other outdoor skills. Many Registered Maine Guides have decades of experience and work with Maine's historic [sporting camps and wilderness lodges](#), places you can go to experience Maine's remote beauty while pursuing your outdoor passions.

Ready to take a walk... and play some tunes? New installations along two riverside trails in Maine are the perfect locale for just that. The nonprofit Bath at Play installed a large xylophone and four-page music book for the [Riverwalk Rhythm](#) in Bath's Bridge Park along the Kennebec River in 2024. The xylophone, also called a cavatina, is made by Percussion Play and is designed to withstand the elements year-round. In October 2024, Brewer opened "Cool Tones on the Riverwalk," an interactive music park nestled along the scenic [Brewer Riverwalk](#) with six stand-alone instruments to play with provided mallets or just with your hands. The music park includes tubular bells, a xylophone and babel drums, and more instruments are expected to be added in the future.

The [Appalachian Mountain Club](#) (AMC) has partnered with The Conservation Fund to purchase and permanently protect nearly 29,000 acres of forestland in Piscataquis County known as Barnard Forest. AMC will bring its fish habitat restoration efforts that benefit threatened species such as native brook trout and endangered Atlantic salmon. Since 2003, AMC's Maine Woods Initiative has permanently protected over 100,000 contiguous acres of forest and fish habitat in Maine's famed 100-Mile Wilderness.

The [Appalachian Mountain Club](#) (AMC) has unveiled a [Gravel Adventure Field Guide](#). The handy guide offers cyclists new routes in a pristine section of Maine east of the Moosehead Lake region. Copies are available at many bike shops in New England and at AMC.

[DoryWoman Rowing](#) offers a unique way to experience winter on the water, lessons and guided tours in a traditional-style wooden dory in Belfast Bay with an experienced Maine Guide and open water rower. This February, a new Row + Sauna + Dip experience will be offered during Belfast's Ice Fest. In April, they will offer a Seaweed Row during Maine Seaweed Week, including a rowing tour of a kelp farm and edible seaweed products.

The Skowhegan River Park (also known as [Run of River](#)) will redevelop an industrial downtown river corridor into an accessible outdoor recreation asset with an expanded trail network and enhanced whitewater activities. The river park will improve river access and free recreation opportunities, and bolster the regional economy by attracting visitors, businesses, and new residents.

The [Nature Conservancy](#) has acquired approximately 13,500 acres of forested land north of Tunk Mountain in Hancock County. The land, which will continue to be open for birding, hunting and fishing, abuts an existing preserve to the north of Tunk Mountain and the northwest corner of the state's Donnell Pond Public Land. The acquisition will expand The Nature Conservancy's 9,700-acre Spring River Preserve.

The [Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument](#) is known for its hiking, paddling and all-around epic outdoor recreation. And now, [The International Dark-Sky Association](#), the world's recognized authority on combatting light

pollution, has designated the monument as an [International Dark Sky Sanctuary](#). Only 13 exist throughout the entire world. And in the United States, there's only one east of the Mississippi.

Ski News

[Sunday River](#) – Newry

The Barker 6, one of the most advanced and fastest 6-person chairlifts in North America opened last season. The lift features ergonomic heated seats, an automatically lowering and locking restraining bar, weather-blocking bubbles and improved wind resistance. The **Igloo**, located in the Jordan Bowl by the base of the Jordan 8 is a one-of-a-kind snow igloo and ice lounge experience. This distinctive structure is made entirely of snow. Additionally, this past summer, the **lobby renovation to the Jordan Hotel** was completed.

[Sugarloaf](#) – Carrabassett Valley

The highlight of the **West Mountain Expansion** is the Bucksaw Express, providing direct access to 12 new beginner and intermediate trails. Nine of these trails were introduced last February with skiers and riders having the opportunity to conquer Twitcher, the 10th trail to come online and skiable this season. A new bridge has been constructed to ski over Sawtooth Road, connecting with Beavertail Trail, with brand new snowmaking guns and pipes, leading all the way down Bucksaw Express. Significant improvements to the load and unload sections of the Bucksaw Express lift will enhance the skiing and riding experience on West Mountain. The **terrain parks** have undergone exciting changes to provide an even better experience for riders. The medium parks have been relocated from the Super Quad to WhiffleTree, consolidating all terrain parks in one area. Off the hill, Sugarloaf looks forward to welcoming a new venue in the village. **L.L. Bean is opening an outlet store** and stay tuned for a new restaurant joining the Village Center scene.

[Pleasant Mountain](#) – Bridgton

This smaller family-friendly ski area just over an hour from Portland is installing their high-speed, detachable chairlift for the 2024/25 winter season called the Summit Express.

[Saddleback Maine](#) – Rangeley

Last season saw the opening of Saddleback's high-elevation mid-mountain restaurant, The Nest. Perched at 3,620' and tucked into the trees, The Nest offers sweeping views of Rangeley. The Nest will be back this season with more fun menu items, creative cocktails, and special dinners where guests can take a ride in Saddleback's cabin snowcat to their destination. The unique construction, design, and sustainability focus won The Nest a recent 2024 [ENR New England Best Project Award](#).

CULTURAL GEMS

[Tekəqəpimək Contact Station](#), slated to open to the public in 2025, sits atop Lookout Mountain and was created to welcome the global public to Katahdin Woods National Monument. Tekəqəpimək is Penobscot for as far as one can see - pronounced de gah-gah bee mook. The architecture, landscape and cultural exhibits are the result of an extensive process with representatives of the Houlton Band of Maliseet, Mi'kmaq Nation, Passamaquoddy Tribe, and Penobscot Nation.

Maine has a new national monument – one of only 13 of 430 national park sites designated to honor women. Located in the scenic town of Newcastle adjacent to the Damariscotta River, the [Frances Perkins Homestead National Monument](#) honors Frances Perkins' (1880-1965) trailblazing advocacy for social justice and labor rights. The first woman to hold a Cabinet position in the U.S. as Secretary of Labor under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, she was the driving force behind many of the benefits and safeguards American workers count on today. Visitors can explore the historic home and trails where Perkins rejuvenated and sought inspiration throughout her 12 years as U.S. Secretary of Labor.

Nine museums, 80,000 pieces of artwork, and a scenic drive through Maine: [The Maine Art Museum Trail](#) brings visitors on a journey to many of the state's best collections of art. Artists have endeavored to capture Maine's beauty for centuries and the trail guides you to artist colonies like Monhegan Island and Ogunquit, as well as esteemed colleges and beloved cities to experience these nine leading art museums, many open year-round.

[Bay Chamber Concerts](#) moved into the former High Mountain Hall, an iconic historic building located in downtown Camden. Expanded and renamed the Bixler Music Center the new facility now includes the 150-seat Hammer Concert Hall. Bay Chamber Concerts is an internationally known chamber music center and the Screen Door Festival.

[Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens](#), in partnership with [Indigo Arts Alliance](#), commissioned two new major works by Indigenous artists [Shane Perley-Dutcher](#) from the Neqotkuk Wolasqiyik (Tobique First Nation) and [Anna Tsouhlarakis](#), an enrolled citizen of the Navajo Nation and Muscogee Creek, to create permanent public art pieces that amplifies Indigenous wisdom, artistry, and presence.

[Johnson Hall Opera House](#), Maine's oldest opera house completed a multi-million dollar renovation with state-of-the-art sound. Located in downtown Gardiner, a National Main Street community, the opera house is open year-round.

The [Maine State Aquarium](#) reopened in Boothbay Harbor with a redesigned interior, new exhibits and displays, and an improved visitor experience.

GASTRONOMY HIGHLIGHTS

There is no shortage of opportunities to sample and enjoy the harvest of land and sea throughout the state. From visits to local farms, lobster boat tours, agricultural fairs and award-winning fine dining, Maine's food industry offers culinary discoveries year-round. Already famous for its lobster, Maine has earned a well-deserved reputation as a culinary destination in creative settings. In addition to lobster and other fresh seafood, Maine is also a leading producer of blueberries, potatoes, apples, and maple syrup – foods that are featured prominently in many traditional and modern Maine recipes.

[Well & Good Brewing](#) has opened its doors in Yarmouth, serving Chuckaboo oatmeal stout, Dewdropper gose, and Saucebox Hazy IPA. The log cabin-style building also has a children's area in its cozy interior.

[Bar Kosho](#) in Bridgton has opened, serving inventive Asian fusion in a restaurant and bar on North High Street, a collaboration between The Little Mountain Store and Street Eats chef Jeremy Donovan.

[Yolked Farm to Table](#) is on the Roosevelt Trail in Windham, run by Maine natives Jesse and Mindy Bouchard, with a fine dining menu that includes rosemary chicken pie, beef osso bucco, and a rack of lamb.

[Buttermilk Kitchen at Marriner's](#) is the latest breakfast and lunch spot to open in Camden. Suzanne Vizethann, chef-owner of Buttermilk Kitchen in Atlanta, treats customers to southern-inspired dishes like fried chicken biscuits, chicken and grits, and biscuits and Maine sausage gravy, as well as Maine favorites including lobster rolls and chowder.

[Maine Day Ventures](#) has added a food and history tour in Biddeford. The 2.5-hour walking tour takes you along revitalized Main Street and through town where textile mills and a thriving theatre and opera scene once took place. Food stops include a family bakeshop, pizza from Maine's original pizza maker and local ice cream. The company offers a variety of tours in several Maine cities and towns.

Portland Food News:

- [Bissell Brothers](#) has opened a second restaurant on Thompson's Point. Called **The Garden**, the new 58-seat greenery-filled restaurant operates adjacent to their current space.

- [Lucky Cheetah](#) opened in Portland. Expect a Cantonese dim sum-style menu, a lengthy champagne list, and Asian cocktails.
- [Leisure Time Cocktail Company](#) has just opened on Thompson's Point, with a 50-seat bar and a menu featuring sausages and pierogis. It's a great spot for concert goers!
- [Thames Landing](#) serves "modern New England fare" at a waterfront setting with menu items like a Lobster Roll, a Wagyu Petit Filet, and Seared Salmon.
- A new brunch spot has opened in Portland's West End. [Ocotillo](#) is inspired by its sister spot, Terlingua, and features indoor and outdoor dining spaces, a beautiful full-bar and custom-built booths.
- [Wine Wise](#) is adding more of their popular [Wine Sails](#) to their schedule. Enjoy sailing in Casco Bay while tasting some of the finest wines in the world. The additional sails mean more Wine Sails, Wine & Oysters Sails, and Chef Series Wine & Food Sails.

For the latest on Portland restaurant openings, check out [Portland Food Map](#).

What to watch for in 2025 (*excerpts from the Portland Press Herald*):

- Josh Sobel, owner of the Philly-style sandwich shop Ramona's on Washington Avenue, is offering Portland another taste of his hometown with [Benny's](#) on Congress Street.
- [Cuties](#), located in Portland, will offer coffee beverages and pastries in the morning and happy hour specials in the afternoon before transitioning in the evening to a casual wine and cocktail bar. The ownership team is working with friends and local purveyors to develop some proprietary beer, wine and coffee blends that will be available only at Cuties.
- Buzz has been building about [Douro](#) since last winter, when the Prentice Hospitality Group first [announced plans](#) to open a sister restaurant to acclaimed fine-dining venues Twelve and Evo Kitchen + Bar. Located near Twelve at 110 Thames St., Douro will have a bright, Mediterranean-style interior aesthetic featuring blue- and white-tiled tables, high ceilings and a centerpiece bar.
- The Luke's Lobster ownership team [announced plans to reopen](#) the long-vacant Dry Dock Restaurant and Tavern on Commercial Street. The revived seafood restaurant is expected to open by early summer, and will be a separate concept, not branded by Luke's.
- [Elda](#) isn't a new restaurant, but a relaunch of the fine-dining, prix-fixe restaurant that had been located in Biddeford from 2017 until last winter. It was announced last February that [Elda would be moving to Portland](#). The goal is to reopen this summer on Portland Street.
- This all-day, brunch-focused café opened in Brunswick in January. Named for the late-morning snack enjoyed by hobbits, [Elevenses](#) is themed after J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings series and will offer classic brunch dishes along with British staples and a full English breakfast.
- Co-owners Angela Lee and Alex LeBlanc are renovating the former Union Bagel space on Cumberland Avenue into a counter-service, salad-centric eatery. The core of [Luncheonette's](#) menu will feature salads with a morning menu of breakfast favorites.
- Paulo's is coming to Brunswick's Fort Andross Mill complex and will pay homage to New Jersey and the Italian-American eateries owners Jeremy and Marina Kratzer frequented before coming to Maine. Paulo's is replacing the [wood-fired pizzeria Nomad](#), and the Skowhegan-built oven will continue to be "the focal point of the dining room, and the heartbeat of the restaurant," according to the owners.
- Midcoast restaurateurs Chelsea and Tony Bickford have taken over the former Scarlet Begonias space in Brunswick, where they aim to [open a Sicilian restaurant](#) this winter. [Pomelia's](#) menu features four variations of Sicilian focaccia-style pizza and a selection of salads and southern Italian pastas.
- Khristine and Zac Leeman opened the upscale bistro [Linden + Front](#) in Bath in February 2024. They also own Sundrenched, a seasonal eatery on Harpswell's Bailey Island. The couple decided this fall to open a third venue at a prime location in Brunswick. The Leemans expect to launch Ram & Bull, a "modern tavern," later this winter and will feature a variety of casual fare.

NEW LODGING

[The Nevada](#) is the completely renovated 70-year-old landmark on Long Sands Beach in York. The building style remains as a classic motel with a sleek new look, larger large rooms, some with private terraces, and an onsite restaurant called Lulu's.

After a \$10 million renovation, the [Dunes on the Waterfront](#) in Ogunquit opened their new cottages. The property consists of 24 cottages overlooking Ogunquit Beach.

[The Pathmaker Hotel](#) is Bar Harbor's newest boutique hotel opening in 2025 and located just two blocks from the sand bar to Bar Island and downtown. An onsite restaurant is also planned.

[Hotel Ursa](#) has opened in the center of University of Maine campus in Orono with 95 guest rooms. It was developed through the historic rehab of two original buildings and joined by a new building offering contemporary guestrooms. The hotel also offers MajorMinor, a cafe and bar where the university community and guests can enjoy locally roasted coffees, baked goods, snacks, and evening beverages.

[The Longfellow Hotel](#) recently opened as a wellness-themed hotel in a five-story, ground-up building located in Portland's West End neighborhood. The lobby has a communal lounge with casual seating and an intimate bar, handcrafted by local millworkers. The property has 48 rooms, and several have French balconies or bay windows.

The [Rockport Harbor Hotel](#), part of the Bayview Collection, is a new 20-room year-round hotel with two dining venues, a lobby-level bar and restaurant called [Oak Room](#) and top-floor venue called the Atrium with a retractable skylight, sliding glass doors and a view of Rockport Harbor.

[Acadia Wilderness Lodge](#) has opened new glamping tents and oceanfront yurts. The property offers a glamping experience with all the amenities close to Acadia National Park.

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