

Maine Story Ideas and News for 2026

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

In Maine, every path, paddle, and place is *Forged by Nature*, shaped by the landscapes and people who bring the outdoors to life in every season. From rugged mountains and remote lakes to scenic coastlines and winding rivers, opportunities abound for hiking, paddling, fishing, biking, and winter adventures. For those seeking expert insight or a deeper connection to Maine's unique places, the state's professional network of guides and outfitters provides exceptional experiences. Members of [Maine Outdoor Brands](#), the [Maine Wilderness Guides Organization](#), and the [Maine Professional Guides Association](#) offer everything from guided backcountry expeditions and wildlife tours to fishing trips and paddling excursions, ensuring visitors of all skill levels can safely and meaningfully experience Maine's stunning landscapes.

Maine's beauty shapes every experience and every story shared here. The same natural and cultural landscapes that inspire adventure also call for care. Through the [Look Out for ME](#) initiative, visitors and residents alike are encouraged to travel thoughtfully by staying on marked trails, packing out what they bring in, supporting local businesses, and respecting the traditions and communities that make Maine unique. By exploring with care and consideration, each of us helps ensure that Maine remains the extraordinary place we love, today and for generations to come.

The [Maine Gear Library Network](#) (MGLN), a first-of-its-kind statewide alliance of gear libraries, has officially launched, providing affordable access to high-quality outdoor equipment. From bikes and kayaks to tents and camp stoves, the network is a community-driven gear lending program committed to equitable access to outdoor recreation for residents and visitors alike. MGLN is actively supporting new gear libraries through technical assistance, equipment sharing and public education. Its [new website](#) offers a statewide directory and information on the benefits of a gear library. Currently, the Maine Gear Library Network includes:

- [Maine GearShare](#) – Brunswick
- [Old Town-Orono Gear Library](#) – Old Town
- [Kindling Collective](#) – Portland
- [Katahdin Gear Library](#) – Millinocket and surrounding region
- Appalachian Mountain Club – offers gear rental from their [three lodges](#) located within Maine's 100-Mile Wilderness
- [Skowhegan Outdoors](#) – Skowhegan

The new [Acadia Gateway Center](#) welcomes visitors to Acadia National Park with free day-use parking, a bus stop for the free Island Explorer and commercial tour buses, and an 11,000- square-foot visitor information center featuring exhibits and information about Acadia National Park, the region, and the state.

Sports lovers are in for a treat now that professional soccer has come to Portland. The wildly popular [Portland Hearts of Pine](#) is part of the USL League One and fans watch them in action at their home field, Fitzpatrick Stadium. The team has brought an unprecedented level of excitement and engagement to the state just in time as fans around the world gear up for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

[Maine Inland Fisheries & Wildlife](#) unveiled the new ME Outdoors mobile app. From purchasing licenses and permits to discovering new places to hunt, fish, and explore, the new app makes navigating Maine’s woods and waters easy. Available now on the Apple App Store and Google Play. Search “ME Outdoors” to get started.

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.

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 in central Maine.

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.

Established ski mountain Sugarloaf has opened the [Sugarloaf Bike Park](#), New England's newest gravity-fed bike park with unlimited access to the Sugarloaf Bike Park Friday through Sunday, with zero blackout dates. Bikers can choose from single-day lift tickets, full season passes, or as an add-on option for 2025/26 pass holders whose home mountain is Sugarloaf.

CULTURAL GEMS

[Tekakapimək Contact Station](#), opened summer 2025, sits atop Lookout Mountain and was created to welcome the public to Katahdin Woods National Monument. Tekakapimək 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 is celebrating America’s semiquincentennial with exhibitions and events exploring Maine’s role in the birth of the United States. The Maine Historical Society is presenting a [year of statewide programming](#), including a tour of a rare copy of the Dunlap Broadside printing of the Declaration, printed in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776, and the new Pathways to Freedom exhibition in Portland featuring rare objects, personal stories including six Maine "Pathfinders" whose lives reveal the many ways the Revolution was shaped and experienced in Maine. In Bar Harbor, the Abbe Museum’s [exhibition](#) *In the Shadow of the Eagle* aims to share a greater understanding of Wabanaki Nations’ place within our ongoing national narrative.

In Maine, [works of art](#) spring from its lands and waters—granite shaped by tides, timbers marked by time and even ice born from winter’s chill. These raw materials are storytellers, carrying the history of Maine’s landscapes, industries and communities. In the hands of artists they also become works of enduring beauty. The latest collection of outdoor art can be found along the [Union River Sculpture Trail](#) extends the existing quarter-mile Riverwalk in Ellsworth into a 0.75-mile pedestrian loop connecting downtown Ellsworth, Knowlton Park, and U.S. Route 1. The trail features sculptures on loan from Maine-based artists, blending public art with outdoor recreation.

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.

[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.

GASTRONOMY HIGHLIGHTS

In Maine, every taste is *Forged by Nature*, from the harvest of land and sea to the creative hands that bring it to the table. Already famous for its fresh and plentiful [lobster](#), the [Maine Oyster Trail](#) and the [Maine Beer Trail](#), Maine has earned a well-deserved reputation as a culinary destination in creative settings. A leading producer of blueberries, potatoes, apples, and maple syrup – foods that are featured prominently in many traditional and modern Maine recipes – Maine offers visitors a chance to discover a culinary landscape as authentic and abundant as the state itself. To learn more about Maine’s food culture, sign up to receive the Maine Office of Tourism seasonal food journal, [Bountiful](#).

[En-Noble](#) offers immersive cultural experiences through specialty food tours and live cooking demonstrations led by cultural Ambassadors from around the world. Hosting weekly specialty store tour experiences, tastings and live cooking demos.

[LB. Kitchen](#), a mainstay in Portland, as a café and mini-mart known for their innovative, functional, healthy food and drinks menu has opened the first of a new brand of convenience stores called LB. Mini-Mart. This is the first location for LB. Mini-Mart, with other locations throughout the Portland area to be announced later this year.

Recent restaurant openings:

- [Lady Fish](#), Portland
- [Gill’s](#), Portland
- [Douro](#), Portland
- [Allagash Bungalow](#), in partnership with [Bite Into Maine](#), Scarborough
- [Dry Dock](#), Portland
- [Elevenes](#), Brunswick
- [Pomelia](#), Brunswick
- [Table Salt](#), Bar Harbor

For the latest Portland restaurant openings, check out [Portland Food Map](#). And from Eat Drink Lucky, here is the [2025 Must-Eat List](#).

NEW LODGING

[Residence Inn/Moxy Hotel by Marriott](#) will open in Summer 2026 as the first hotel to be built at Thompson’s Point, Portland’s pre-eminent entertainment venue for concerts, events and seasonal ice skating. Neighbors include the Children’s Museum & Theatre of Maine, Bissell Brothers Brewing and Stroudwater Distillery.

In May 2026, the [Evalina Hotel](#) will open in a historic waterfront building in Portland’s Old Port district. The boutique hotel will offer 15 apartment-style suites in the restored 1854 Granite Block Building, designed with a preservation-first approach that highlights artisanal craft, unique historic character, and intimate connection with the Old Port neighborhood. The hotel is managed and operated by Fathom Companies, a Portland-based hospitality management group known for its thoughtful restoration of historic properties and award-winning guest experiences.

[Arbor Camp](#) is a collection of cabins and treehouses on the Union River in Ellsworth Falls. After a soft launch in late July 2025, they are planning for five additional treehouses to open late spring of 2026 and more later in the year. The dwellings offer year-round stays that keep guests close to the beauty of the Maine outdoors. Each space

stands alone privately and includes a compact, complete kitchen, outdoor grill, wood-burning stove, Breeo® smokeless fire pit, private hot tub, and EV charging at private parking.

[Breakwater Inn](#), one of Kennebunkport's historic and most beloved ocean view hotels, reopened in July 2025, following the sale of the property and complete renovation of its harborside guest rooms and the debut of a brand-new restaurant and bars.

In 2025, [The Trident Inn](#) in Ogunquit was completely transformed. What was formerly 2 Village Square Inn and Ogunquit's oldest inn property, The Trident Inn has been reimagined for today's traveler while honoring the inn's rich past. The inn includes their new on-property restaurant, [Coastal Alchemist](#).

[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 rooms, some with private terraces, and an onsite restaurant called Lulu's.

In early 2025, [The Viewpoint Hotel](#) in York unveiled [The Spa House](#), featuring massages, facials, foot soaks, and more, inspired by the natural therapy of Maine's coast and using organically grown products. The Spa House comes on the heels of the fall 2024 opening of The Baths, offering a Canadian cedar sauna, hot tub, outdoor shower, and outdoor fireplace for all hotel guests. A cold plunge will be added soon.

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