

Maine – A Four-Season Destination

Maine's seasons are as distinctive as the state itself, from balmy summer beach days to serene winter snowfalls that make for a skier's paradise. And with attractions and activities unique to each season unfolding throughout the year, Maine offers an escape from the everyday all year long.

WINTER

When the summer visitors and leaf peepers head home, winter shares a side of Maine that shouldn't be missed. Those who hear the quiet call of snow-swept woods and fields know that winter is Maine's best kept secret. Mainers are known to be hardy folk, but really, we just know how to have fun in the snow.

Outdoor Recreation

- **Skiing & Snowboarding:** Maine has more than a dozen ski areas in the Western Mountains with plenty of powder and trails for all skill levels, including Sunday River, Sugarloaf and Saddleback Mountain.
- **Cross-Country Skiing:** Those who want to enjoy the outdoors at a slower pace will revel in the serenity of a cross-country ski trek around 550 kilometers of Nordic ski trails.
- **Snowshoeing & Winter Hiking:** Maine's many state parks, land trusts and Acadia National Park provide the perfect, easily accessible settings to strap on pair of snowshoes and head out into the woods or up to a snowy summit. Some of the most popular spots include Mount Blue State Park, Bradbury Mountain State Park and the Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust.
- **Snowmobiling:** With more than 14,000 miles of groomed trails, you can ride uninterrupted from one end of the state to the other and all sorts of places in between. Trail towns from Bethel and Rangeley to Jackman, Greenville, Millinocket and Madawaska have gas stations, lunch stops and nearly 300 snowmobiling clubs that maintain the local trails.
- **Fat Tire Biking:** Take two-wheeled fun to another level on fat biking trails across the state.
- **Dogsledding:** With various dogsledding tours throughout the state, it's time to meet some new furry friends and experience one of the most exciting ways to traverse Maine's beautiful winter landscapes.
- **Winter Wildlife Watching:** Winter residents like black-capped chickadees, juncos, cedar and bohemian waxwings are favorites and you can join in the Christmas Bird Count throughout the state.
- Additional winter outdoor recreation activities and more details can be found [here](#).

Things to Do

- **Winter Shopping:** From bargain to boutique, Maine has all your winter and holiday shopping covered. Head to Freeport to peruse more than 120 stores, and of course, the L.L.Bean Flagship Store. The Kittery Outlets, just across the border, are a must-shop spot for anyone driving up from New Hampshire. To show a little local love all across the state, check out our many charming [Main Street Maine](#) communities for unique shops and plenty of Maine-made finds.
- **Winter Festivals:** Winter is a time to come together, and there's no better way to do just that than by experiencing our many winter festivals. Rangeley's Snodeo is all about high-octane snowmobile fun, Skowhegan's [Somerset SnowFest](#) features the unique sport of Skijoring, while Boothbay Lights, Kennebunkport's Christmas Prelude and Camden and Rockland's Christmas by the Sea are all delightful ways to get into the holiday spirit.
- **Winter Tours:** From art to sampling brews, there are plenty of places and spaces to tour. [The Maine Art Museum Trail](#) can keep art lovers happy all winter long, but for a unique look at Maine's role in American art, try a guided tour of the [Farnworth Museum](#). In Portland, Bar Harbor, Biddeford and beyond, you can satisfy your inner foodie with a [Maine Foodie Tour](#). And whether you consider yourself a craft beer connoisseur or not, the [Maine Brews Cruise](#) will be sure you sample local favorites and quirky batches at Portland's beloved breweries, distilleries and wineries.

More winter-related information in Maine, including places to stay, can be found [here](#).

SPRING

Spring in Maine is everything good about spring, amplified. As ski hills and snowmobile clubs wind down for the year, warm-weather businesses begin to open their doors and Mother Nature blooms along the coast and in Maine's many state parks and recreational areas. Discover some of our unique traditions, can't-miss places and a few off-the-beaten path adventures—all without the summertime crowds.

Unique Traditions

- **Maine Maple Sunday:** Held on the fourth Sunday in March, [Maine Maple Sunday](#) is a celebration of all things maple, and the end of winter (even if there still is some snow on the ground). Find a sugarhouse and get ready to sample sweet maple treats like freshly made maple syrup, maple drizzled ice cream and so much more. Considering Somerset County is the largest maple syrup producing county in the U.S., you'll have no trouble finding a place to start. When the smoke starts billowing from the sugarhouse chimneys—you know spring is here. Sweet tooth encouraged.
- **Ice Out/Fish On:** Communities throughout the state celebrate the thawing of lakes and rivers by forming fund-raising pools and guessing when the ice will finally melt. (At Moosehead, ice-out has been recorded since 1848!) Mainers will place objects on the still-frozen lake surface, guess when the ice will thaw, and when the objects finally sink, the ice is officially out. And that means [the fishing is on](#).

Outdoor Activities

- **Skiing:** You might be tired of the snow, but some of the [best skiing](#) is still ahead of you at resorts like [Sugarloaf](#) and [Sunday River](#), which can stay open as late as May depending on the year.
- **Hiking:** [Spring hiking](#) in [Maine's 32 state parks](#) is a pursuit in pure joy. Not least because you don't need four layers. You'll feel like you have the trail all to yourself (so if you're dreaming of [Acadia](#) without the crowds, now's the time).
- **Fishing:** Now that rivers are flowing freely, it's time to get out on the water. [Spring fishing](#) promises hungry brook trout and freshly accessible lakes.
- **Paddling:** For paddlers, it's the beginning of [white-water rafting](#) season. Maine's Dead, Kennebec and Penobscot rivers are tried-and-true perennial favorites for roiling rapids and adrenaline-pumping drop-offs.
- **Birding:** For a symphony of color and song, head to Maine's breathtaking boreal forests where cedar waxwings and other rare birds are just a glimpse away. [Birdwatching](#) continues to pick up with celebrations like the Rangeley Birding Festival.

Arts and Culture

- **Maine Art Museum Trail:** Expect to find work from masters like Winslow Homer, Marsden Hartley and Robert Indiana. Though the majority of the museums on the trail are open year-round, a few have extended seasonal closures. Be sure to check the museums' [seasonal hours here](#).

Blooming Gardens

- Featuring more than 300 acres that includes a mile of tidal saltwater frontage in [Boothbay](#), the [Coastal Maine Botanical Garden](#) is the largest garden in New England where rare beauties like slender blue flag and lady's slipper flowers show off.
- In Northeast Harbor, the Japanese-garden inspired [Asticou Azalea Garden](#) gets you in the zen zone.
- Come Memorial Day weekend, fans of fragrant lilacs shouldn't miss the [McLaughlin Garden Lilac Festival](#) in South Paris.
- Additional gardens and landscape information can be found [here](#).

More spring-related information in Maine, including off-the-beaten path activities, shopping and dining, can be found [here](#).

SUMMER

In summer, there's no better place to be than in Maine. From the beaches to the mountains, there's so much to explore, and enjoy, you might not know where to start. But you've come to the right place.

Outdoor Recreation

- **Biking:** No matter how, or where, you like to ride, Maine has the perfect two-wheeled adventure for everyone. From the coastline to the woodlands and every town in between. Whether you're looking to explore off-road, or on, there are plenty of routes and trails to choose from throughout the state.
- **Camping:** Maine is chock full of scenic campsites in every corner of the state. Choose from backcountry wilderness, RV parks, state parks and even glamping for those who like a little luxury with their outdoor accommodations.
- **Fishing:** Cast a line and hope for the best. And Maine has some of the best fishing spots in the country. From saltwater to freshwater - lakes, rivers and The Atlantic. Take your pick and reel in a story to tell.
- **On the Water:** A summer day on the water in Maine just can't be beat. With nearly 3,500 miles of shoreline and thousands of inland bodies of water, you're sure to find a waterway that suits your sense of adventure.
- **Hiking & Climbing:** Let's take summer one step at a time. Maine is home to thousands of acres to explore and full of paths to hike and mountains to climb. And no matter where you go, here, every route is the scenic route.

Things To Do

- **Lighthouses & Sightseeing:** It doesn't get any more iconic than lighthouses in Maine. These beacons have beckoned visitors for years. So, set your sights on some of Maine's most unique sightseeing destinations this summer.
- **Food & Drink:** From the freshest seafood to every kind of craft beer, each meal is another opportunity to experience a taste of Maine.
- **Arts & Culture:** Maine has inspired artists for centuries. The rugged coastline, the mountains, the forests and the seas have all been a muse to painters, sculptors, musicians and writers. This summer, experience Maine's museums, festivals and performing arts for yourself.

More summer-related information in Maine, including places to stay, can be found [here](#).

FALL

Every autumn, Mother Nature puts on a spectacular show of orange, scarlet and yellow. But the vivid colors are only part of the allure of a fall getaway in Maine. Some call it the "off season," but we prefer to call it the "show-off" season.

Outdoor Recreation

- **Hiking & Climbing:** Immerse yourself in a world of brilliant color on a fall hike. The crisp air is invigorating, and the crunch of leaves under your boots most satisfying. Be sure to keep track of sundown and let someone back home know before you head out. Check out [Maine Trail Finder](#) for hikes for all abilities.
- **On the Water:** Many Mainers believe the best way to see Maine is from the water, and we have to agree, especially in the fall! Hop aboard a [Maine Windjammer](#) and take a leisurely sail around the coast's brilliant colors, or take things at your own pace with a [sea kayaking](#) trip. And when you're out on the water, how about having a destination in mind? Early fall is the perfect time to visit one of Maine's many [islands](#). Ferry service is available and can get you to a little slice of heaven in no time.
- **Fall Beach Days:** Summer beach days, move over! Fall has arrived. The air is cooler, but sunny days are still plentiful. Plus, you'll find you may have a bit more towel room and parking is a snap. Bring a cozy sweater and book for optimal relaxation at one of Maine's [many beaches](#).
- **Biking:** Scenic drives through Maine in the fall are one thing, but taking to the trails on two wheels can't be beat. There's nothing quite like peddling through tunnels of vibrant colors or biking to a breathtaking overlook. And Maine has scenic trails and picturesque routes for miles.
- **Camping:** This fall, get out and explore the outdoors. Sleep under the stars. Surround yourself with the fiery colors of an autumn day. And then enjoy the warm glow of fire on a cool fall night. Scenic campsites from the coast to the mountains mean you can make the most of the season.

Things to Do

- **Leaf-peeping Opportunities:** Possibly obvious, but nonetheless necessary to mention, Maine's fall

foliage is a true showstopper. Peak foliage season varies across the state, but it is typically from the last week of September to the first two weeks of October. The good news? Maine has a [foliage tracker](#) that starts up in September to help you plan your trip. While you're here, there are plenty of ways to experience the foliage's beauty — whether from a mountain's peak or the comfort of your car.

- **Stunning Drives:** Maine's foliage is accessible to everyone via the state's numerous [National Scenic Byways](#). Maine has seven of them! These historic drives are designated by the federal government as some of the most beautiful and enjoyable across the country. Add fall foliage, and you're in for a real treat! Take a leisurely drive or stop for a picnic and impromptu photo shoot at one of these seven winding beauties that have been designated National Scenic Byways.
- **Apple Picking:** Nothing is more quintessentially fall than a big, heaping bucket of round, red apples. Not to mention all the treats that often come along with the apple-picking experience, a true celebration of fall: apple cider doughnuts and baked apple turnovers still warm in their bags, piping-hot cider, and chilled sparkling cider served in frosty glass bottles.
- **Fall Festivities & Fairs:** Kettle corn, cotton candy, games, rides, baby animals and more! Fall is the season for some of Maine's final fairs of the year. Head to one of these events for a nostalgic trip down memory lane and quintessential New England fun. Be sure to stay up to date on the fairs' websites for changes and safety protocol information.
- **Arts & Culture:** Let the vibrant colors of Maine's fall foliage inspire you to check out the [Maine Art Museum Trail](#). With nine museums and more than 80,000 works of art, you'll be in awe of Maine's diverse and impressive art collections. Worked up a thirst during all the museum hopping? We have you covered. Take a look at our [Art & Ales Trip Ideas](#) for tips on where to find art in Maine in many shapes and forms. From gigantic sculptures to live performances, you can take in the magic of Maine art and sample the art of handcrafted local brews that start with Maine's clear, clean water and expert brewers.
- **Shopping:** Find the perfect Maine-made gift for everyone on your list. Whether you're window shopping on a quaint Main Street or starting your holiday shopping in earnest, Maine has plenty of boutiques, mom and pop shops and general stores for you to peruse a curated selection of well-crafted Maine goods.
- **Fall Meandering:** Whether you want to follow a trail or roam as you wish, we have some ideas to help you choose the perfect fall jaunt. The newly enhanced [Maine Oyster Trail](#) will help you experience Maine's acclaimed bivalve from the farmer to the raw bar. Speaking of farms, get off the beaten path and try at least one of our [Farms & Fiber Arts Trip Ideas](#). Enjoy a getaway by visiting farms, farm stands and specialty shops, or try a workshop where you can learn a variety of skills, like knitting a sweater from Maine wool. If you are in Maine during the first weekend in October, don't miss [Maine Craft Weekend](#). It's the chance to see private artist studios and meet the artists, visit craft-based schools and craft beer breweries collaborating with artists, and purchase Maine-made goods at pop-up shops.

More fall-related information in Maine, including places to stay, can be found [here](#).

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