

Maine



Blessed with one of America's most magnificent coastlines, Maine looms large over New England. Countless islands, deep-water harbors, and wild, glacier-carved bays create the dramatic beauty of Maine's rocky shores – which, if smoothed from end to end, would stretch more than 3500 miles. Planted along this seascape are fishing villages, summer resorts and picture-book colonial towns, with a thickly settled southern coast and wilder untouched scenery to the northeast. A suitable introduction to Maine is the old city of Portland, whose atmospheric downtown boasts a growing restaurant and gallery scene. East of there, the Midcoast offers a mix of old shipbuilding villages, academic settlements and pretty harbor towns. Further east lies Acadia National Park, a spectacular island of mountains, lakes, fjord-like estuaries and coves. Beyond it stretch the little-visited peninsulas and jagged cliffs running east to Canada.

While the coast is the fame of Maine, inland travel offers ample reward. This is, after all, 'the pine state' with forests covering 90% of the land. Thousands of lakes and ponds fill the vast wilderness, with moose and bald eagles far outnumbering humans. Maine's own stretch of White Mountains provide alpine appeal, luring snow-seekers to slopes near Bethel and Rangeley, while further east lies the cloud-piercing summit of Mt Katahdin.

Adventure comes in many forms in Maine, from racing white-water rapids to kayaking tranquil coves along the coast; there's hiking, bird-watching, mountain-biking and rock-climbing, with plenty of bucolic B&Bs in which to recover after the day is done. Perhaps best of all are the wondrous fruits of the sea. The lobsters fished from Maine waters have no equal anywhere on earth: other attractions aside, a lobster feast is reason enough to linger here.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Exploring the galleries, restaurants and bars on the atmospheric back streets of Portland's **Old Port District** (p474)
- Hiking up Cadillac Mountain, followed by a dip in Echo Lake in **Acadia National Park** (p508)
- Photographing the cliffs of **Monhegan Island** (p493), whose dramatic scenery has inspired countless artists
- Strolling the peaceful, historic lanes of **Castine** (p498), a marvelous colonial village on the sea
- Seeing the sun rise over the magnificent cliffs of **Quoddy Head State Park** (p512, the eastern-most point in America)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 207 ■ POPULATION: 1.3 MILLION ■ AREA: 35,387 SQ MILES

Orientation & Information

Maine is the northernmost state in the continental United States, and the behemoth of New England, roughly equal in size to the other five states combined. To the north and west, Maine borders Canada and to the southwest New Hampshire (NH), with whom it shares a portion (53,000 acres) of the White Mountains.

Good sources of information include the following:

DeLorme's Maine Atlas & Gazetteer (www.delorme.com) The best map of the state, bar none.

Maine Office of Tourism (☎ 207-287-5711, 888-624-6345; www.visitmaine.com; 59 State House Station, Augusta) These folks maintain information centers on the principal routes into the state – Calais, Fryeburg, Hampden, Houlton, Kittery and Yarmouth. Each facility is open 9am to 5pm, with extended hours in the summer.

Maine Tourism Association (www.mainetourism.com) Links all Chamber of Commerce offices in Maine.

Maine Website (www.maine.gov) The state's official website.

Portland Press Herald (www.pressherald.maintoday.com)

History

Maine's first inhabitants were descendants of Ice Age hunters, a hardy lot comprising dozens of tribes before the arrival of Europeans. They were collectively known as the Wabanaki ('people of the dawn'), and numbered perhaps 20,000 in Maine when the English set up Popham colony at the tip of the Phippsburg peninsula in 1607. Unlike Jamestown (Virginia), which was founded in the same year, the early Maine settlement failed and dispersed.

Over the next several generations, other English settlements sprang up in the Province of Maine, though settlers there faced enormous hardship from harsh winters and attacks by Native Americans. Adding insult to injury, Maine lost its sovereignty when Massachusetts took over the failing colony in 1692.

Bloody battles raged for many generations, destroying entire villages in Maine, with settlers facing attacks from Native Americans, the French and later the British. This didn't end until after the War of 1812, when the British finally withdrew from Maine. After ridding itself of the royal yoke, Maine focused on freeing itself from its Boston rulers, and in 1820 it gained its independence, becoming the 23rd state in the union.

The 19th century was one of tremendous growth for the new state, with the emergence of new industries. Timber brought wealth to the interior, with Bangor becoming the lumber capital of the world in the 1830s. Fishing, shipbuilding, granite quarrying and farming were also boom industries, alongside manufacturing, with textile and paper mills employing large swaths of the population.

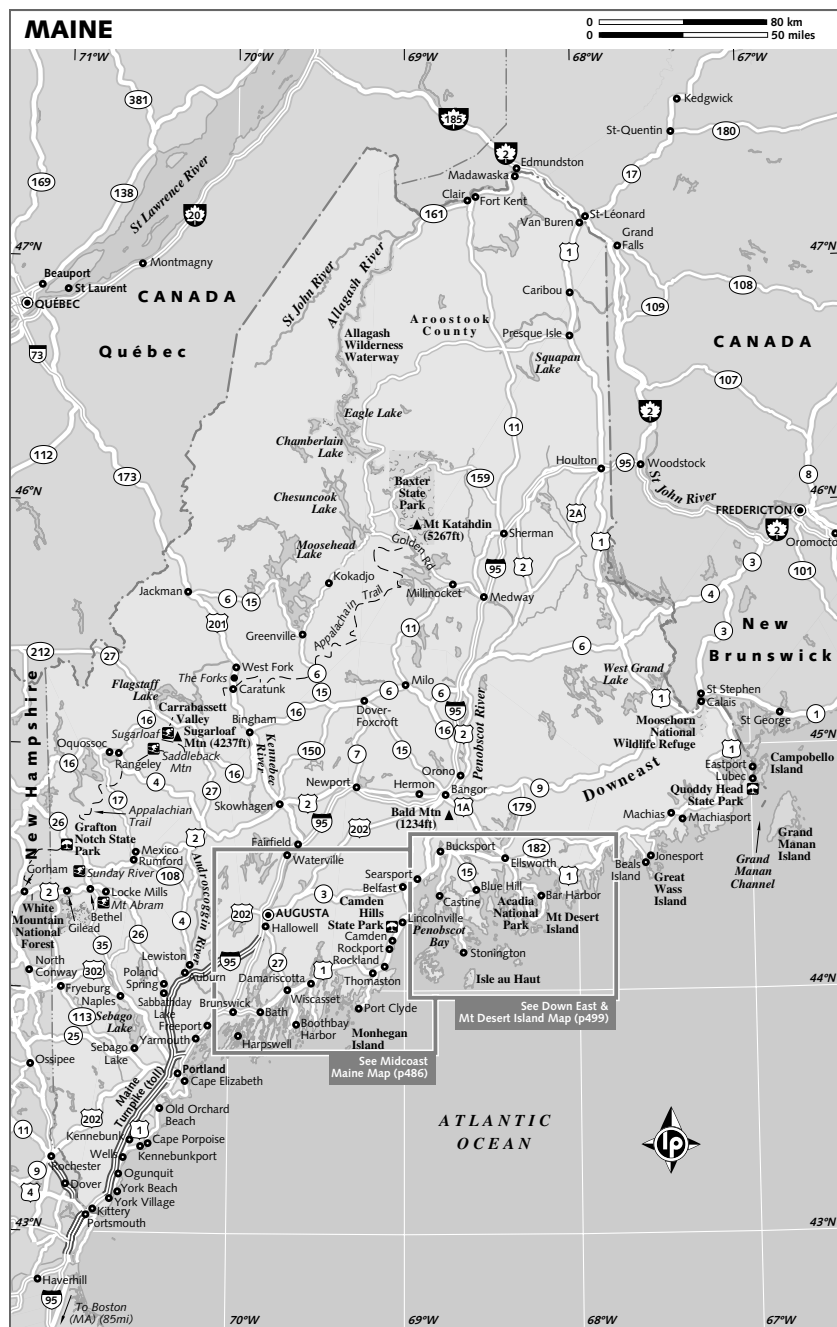
Unfortunately, the boom days were short-lived, with a collapse on land (sawmills couldn't compete with larger, more accessible forests out west) and on sea (brought on by devastating overfishing) as nearly every major industry in Maine foundered. By the turn of the century, population growth stagnated and Maine became a backwater.

Ironically, Maine's rustic, undeveloped landscape would later become part of its great appeal to would-be visitors. Maine soon emerged as a summer cottage destination around the time the slogan 'Vacationland' (which still adorns Maine license plates) was coined in the 1890s. Today, tourism accounts for 15% of the state's economy (compared to the 6% average elsewhere in New England).

The Culture

Mainers are a tough breed. Their ancestors experienced many years of hardship, while today's generation continues to endure some of New England's fiercest winters and some of its least optimistic economic prospects. Among other things, this has led to a tenacious pride in being a 'native' – which means not only being born (and spending one's entire life) in Maine, but coming from a family that lived here at least a generation prior to one's birth. It's also set up a bit of antagonism with growing numbers of folk 'from away' who have summer homes in Maine, and are often blamed (rightly, it turns out) for driving up the price of real estate, which in turn has forced natives off their land.

Mainers trace their stock back to various waves of immigration, with large groups of Irish arriving during the potato famines of the 1840s. Significant numbers of Scots, Finns, Swedes and French Canadians have also planted their roots in the northern state. Meanwhile, the real Maine natives were mostly wiped out during the colonial days, with only five tribes remaining today – the Abenaki (southwest), Penobscot (south-central),



Passamaquoddy (southeast), Maliseet (north-central) and Mi'kmaq (north).

Land & Climate

Covered by glacial ice some 25,000 years ago, Maine is a geographic adolescent. The glaciers, which finally receded about 12,000 years ago, certainly left their mark on the state. Maine boasts nearly 6000 lakes and ponds (the largest of which is Moosehead Lake, p519), close to 5000 salt-water islands and another 5000 rivers and streams. Its highest point is 5267ft-tall Mt Katahdin (Penobscot for 'greatest mountain', p519), with another 10 mountains surpassing 4000ft (and over 100 above 3000ft). These lie in the White Mountain Region, which covers northwestern Maine.

Maine's best known region is the coastal lowland, which runs from 10 to 40 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean with sandy beaches in the south, jagged inlets in the center and rugged cliffs in the north. Further into the interior lie the eastern New England uplands which, as far as Mainers are concerned, means fertile farmland, where local crops – particularly potatoes – flourish.

In summer coastal Maine tends to be more temperate and less humid than inland Maine because of ocean breezes, but in the winter those same winds can turn awfully bitter. The interior receives its share of snow and arctic blasts. Spring is fleeting and arrives late, and as such, the tourist season on the coast doesn't really open for business in earnest until May. In the fall, blue-sky days tend to be crisp, providing the perfect backdrop to the reds and golds of autumn. Fog in Maine is as iconic as its coastal brethren the lighthouse, and it can arrive at any time along the seascape. It tends to come thicker and more frequently the further east you travel.

Parks & Wildlife

Maine has an excellent assortment of state parks, suitable for every conceivable outdoor activity. It also boasts New England's only national park, **Acadia National Park** (p508), an extremely popular getaway in the summer.

The state's 35 parks are overseen by the **Bureau of Parks & Lands** (☎ 207-287-3821; www.maine.gov/doc/parks) and staff will send you an information pack that describes each in detail. For camping at these

parcs, call the central **reservation hotline** (☎ 207-624-9950, 800-332-1501).

About 275 miles of the 2150-mile Appalachian Trail runs through Maine, and it is perhaps most easily accessible via Grafton Notch State Park (p517), although the hiking is tough here. Its northern terminus is Baxter State Park (p519) and the summit of Mt Katahdin. The White Mountain National Forest (p517) also has dramatic sections of protected land in northern Maine, although most people tend to think that the forest stops at the New Hampshire border.

Maine has abundant wildlife in its thick forests. Foremost is the moose, a magnificent animal standing six to seven feet tall at the shoulder and weighing up to 1200lb. There are an estimated 30,000 in the state. Other animals present in the state include harbor seals, black bear, beaver, fox, eastern coyotes, skunks, otter, snowshoe hares, white-tailed deer, porcupines and red squirrels. More than 400 bird species have been spotted in Maine, including the osprey, bald eagles, snowy egret, peregrine falcon and puffins.

Getting There & Around

AIR

Portland International Jetport (☎ 207-874-8877; www.portlandjetport.org) is the state's main airport, but a number of airlines serve **Bangor International Airport** (☎ 866-359-2264; www.flybanor.com).

BOAT

Maine State Ferry Service (☎ 207-596-2202; www.maine.gov/mdot/opt/ferry/maine-ferry-service.php) operates boats to several larger islands. **Bay Ferries** (☎ 877-359-3760; www.catferry.com) offers services to Yarmouth in Nova Scotia (Canada) from Bar Harbor (p508), while its Cat Ferry runs from Portland (p482).

BUS

Concord Trailways (☎ 800-639-3317; www.concordtrailways.com) operates daily buses between Boston and many Maine towns (including Bangor, Bar Harbor, Bath, Belfast, Brunswick, Camden/Rockport, Damariscotta, Ellsworth, Lincolnville, Portland, Rockland, Searsport, Waldoboro and Wiscasset). Some of these connect with the Maine State Ferry Service to islands off the coast.

From Bangor, **SMT/Acadian** (☎ 800-567-5151; www.smtbus.com) and **Cyr Bus Lines** (☎ 800-244-2335;