

# Prince Edward Island



Move over Mounties, Canada's got a spunky, redheaded feminine side. Wherever you go in Prince Edward Island (PEI), little Anne Shirley, Lucy Maud Montgomery's immortal heroine of *Anne of Green Gables*, is larger than her fictional bristles. Ironically, the island itself is a redhead – from tip to tip sienna-colored soil peeks out from under potato plants, and the shores are lined with rose and golden sand. Mi'kmaw legend tells of the Great Spirit of creation who reserved a small amount of red dirt to form 'the fairest of all earthly places,' Prince Edward Island. Today modern technology tells us that the red hue is from a high iron oxide content.

Canada's tiniest province lies in the Gulf of St Lawrence. The crescent-shaped island's deep bays and tidal rivers have created a convoluted shoreline that divides the province into three equal parts. Eastern PEI, known as Kings County, hosts secluded beaches and small fishing villages; its wealth of stunning routes is gaining international renown as a cycling destination. Queens County, covering most of central PEI, has cemented its reputation for verdant countryside and as the center of Anne fever; having some of Canada's finest beaches only increases the area's appeal. Prince County, which makes up western PEI, is a fascinating and gorgeous place to explore the cultures and history of the French Acadians and Mi'kmaq aboriginal peoples. Despite the splendor, most visitors fall in love with PEI's charm and relaxed atmosphere.

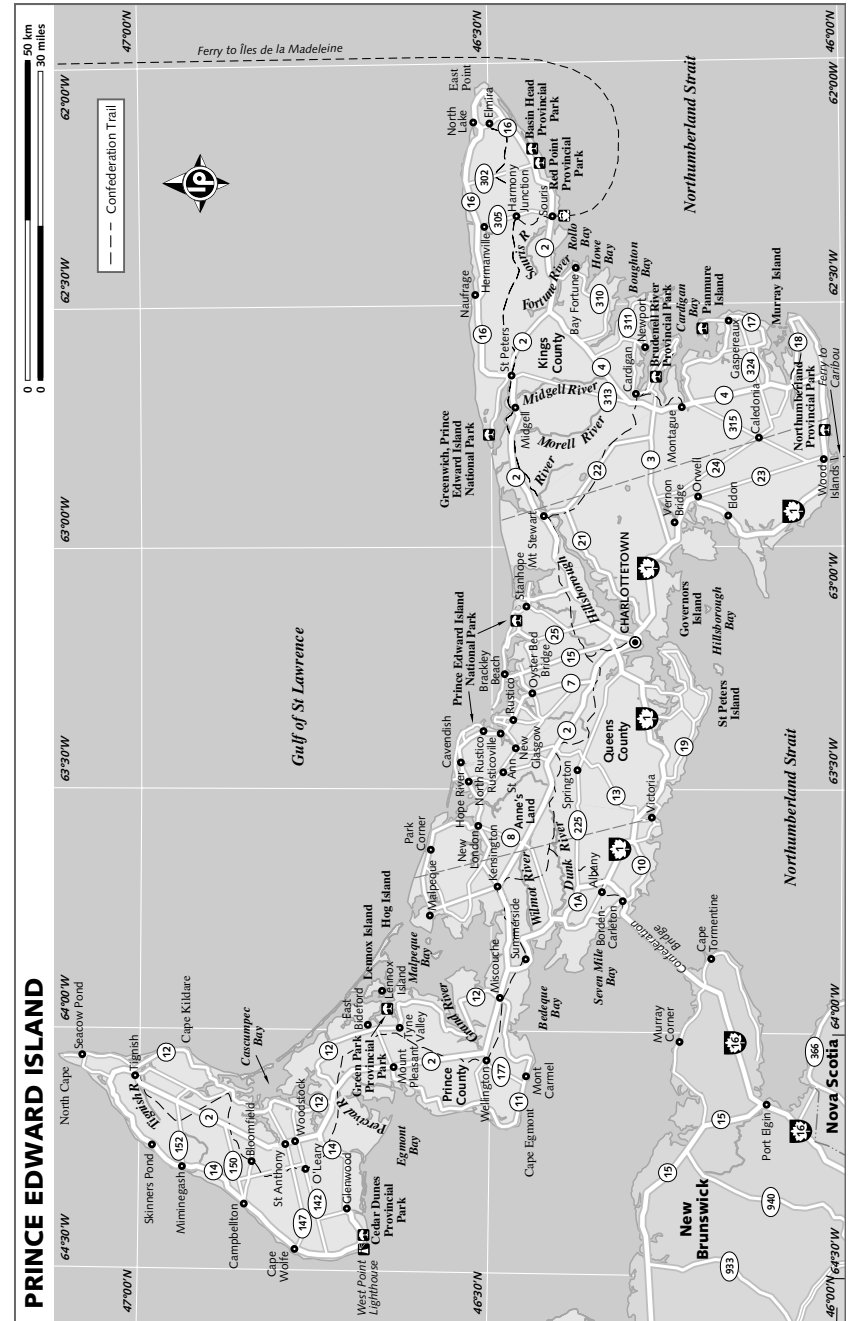
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Wear a bib and get lobster juice up to your elbows at a traditional PEI **lobster supper** (p205) in New Glasgow
- Admire PEI's lack of hills while cycling the red-dirt, nearly bump-free, 279km **Confederation Trail** (p200)
- Paddle peacefully past the sandstone cliffs, endless beaches and patchwork fields of **Prince Edward Island National Park** (p201)
- Wiggle your feet and make a squeak on the 'singing' sands of **Basin Head Beach** (p198)
- Shop, stroll and be transported back to the birth of Canada in **Old Charlottetown** (p186)
- Explore Mi'kmaw culture, eat a traditional meal and shop for crafts in the village of **Lennox Island First Nation** (p213)
- Be taken away into the pages of *Anne of Green Gables* while visiting the Green Gables House in **Cavendish** (p206)
- Step-dance to bagpipes and fiddles at a Scottish **ceilidh** (p195) in Summerside



■ AREA: 5700 SQ KM    ■ POPULATION: 137,800    ■ CAPITAL: CHARLOTTETOWN



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

**PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND IN...****Two Days**

Spend the better part of a day wandering through the historic, leafy streets of **Old Charlottetown** (below). Ascend the grand stairs of **Province House** (opposite) to see Canada's birthplace, then gawk at the harbor view from the veranda of **Beaconsfield House** (p189), before chilling out under some shade in Victoria Park's **waterfront gardens** (p189). Drive out of town for a **lobster supper** (see the boxed text, p205) at New Glasgow or St Anns.

Next morning, pack your beach gear and plop yourself on one of the exquisite beaches of **Prince Edward Island National Park** (p201) then explore the magnificent dunes at **Greenwich** (p199).

**Four Days**

Follow the two-day itinerary then spend a day visiting the Anne-related sights near **Cavendish** (p206). Enjoy your last day exploring the coast by kayak from **North Rustico** (p204) or cycling the Confederation Trail around **Mt Stewart** (p200).

**One Week**

After enjoying your four-day itinerary, allow a few days to tour **Kings County** (p195), with stops at **Orwell** (p195), **Montague** (p196) and the illustrious **Basin Head Beach** (p198).

Alternatively, delve into the Acadian and Mi'kmaq cultures of **Prince County** (p209) while en route from **Summerside** (p209) to the **North Cape** (p214).

## CHARLOTTETOWN

It's been said that Charlottetown (population 32,200) is too small to be grand and too big to be quaint. In fact, PEI's capital is just about the perfect size; it's compact enough for a newcomer to navigate, while hip eateries, eclectic shopping and the city's elegant historical sites are only a leisurely stroll apart. Quiet colonial and Victorian streets lined with gracious trees, elegant 19th-century mansions and the island's signature redbrick facades occasionally give way to contemporary buildings that give the city an intriguing mix of old and new. Charlottetown's history, natural beauty and short visiting season ensure that its streets are packed with visitors every July and August.

**HISTORY**

Charlottetown is named after the exotic consort of King George III. Her African roots, dating back to Margarita de Castro Y Sousa and the Portuguese royal house, are as legendary as they are controversial. The idea that this English queen had an African ancestry is still too much for many historians to handle.

While many believe the city's splendid harbor was the reason Charlottetown became

the capital, the reality was less glamorous. In 1765 the surveyor-general selected Charlottetown because he thought it prudent to bestow the poor side of the island with some privileges. Thanks to the celebrated 1864 conference, however, Charlottetown is etched in Canadian history as the country's birthplace.

**ORIENTATION**

University Ave is the city's largest street; its southern terminus is punctuated by historic Province House, which marks the entrance to Old Charlottetown. Befitting the transition is the stark juxtaposition of the house and the modern Confederation Centre of the Arts.

Parallel to University Ave is Queen St, which runs west of the Confederation Centre. Queen St and the adjacent blocks on Grafton, Richmond and Sydney Sts are home to Charlottetown's finest restaurants and shops.

Majestic Great George St runs south from Province House, past impressive St Dunstan's Basilica to Peake's Wharf and Confederation Landing Park. The waterfront is the hub of summer activity, hosting various festivals.

To the west of town, on the waterfront, is the verdant Victoria Park and its sweeping promenade.

**INFORMATION**  
**Bookstores**

**Bookman** (☎ 902-892-8872; 177 Queen St) Huge selection of rare secondhand books.

**Reading Well Bookstore** (☎ 902-566-2703; 87 Water St) Features local authors.

**Emergency**

**Police, Ambulance & Fire** (☎ 911)

**Royal Canadian Mounted Police** (☎ 902-368-9300; 450 University Ave) For nonemergencies.

**Internet Access**

Numerous cafés throughout the city have wi-fi as do many hotels and B&Bs.

**Confederation Centre Public Library** (☎ 902-368-4642; cnr Queen & Grafton Sts; ☎ 10am-8pm Tue-Thu, to 5pm Fri & Sat, 1-5pm Sun) Free Internet access.

**Timothy's World Coffee** (☎ 902-628-8503; 137B Kent St; per hr \$5; ☎ 7am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 11:30am-5pm Sun)

**Internet Resources**

**Visit Charlottetown** ([www.visitcharlottetown.com](http://www.visitcharlottetown.com))

A helpful website with upcoming festival information, city history and visitor information.

**Medical Services**

**Polyclinic Professional Centre** (☎ 902-629-8810; 199 Grafton St; ☎ 5:30-8pm Mon-Fri, 9:30am-noon Sat) Charlottetown's after-hours, walk-in medical clinic.

Non-Canadians must pay a \$40 fee.

**Queen Elizabeth Hospital** (☎ 902-894-2111; 60 Riverside Dr; ☎ 24hr) Emergency services.

**Money**

PEI wants your tourist dollar; banks and ATMs are everywhere.

**TD Canada Trust** (☎ 902-629-2265; 192 Queen St; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Wed, to 8pm Thu & Fri, 9am-3pm Sat)

**Post**

**Main post office** (☎ 902-628-4400; 135 Kent St)

**Tourist Information**

**Visitors center** (☎ 902-368-4444, 888-734-7529; [www.peiplay.com](http://www.peiplay.com); Founders' Hall; ☎ 9am-8pm Jun, to 10pm Jul & Aug, 8:30am-6pm Sep-mid-Oct, 9am-4:30pm Mon-Fri mid-Oct-May) Located in Founders' Hall, this is the island's main visitors center. It has all the answers and a plethora of brochures and maps, too.

**SIGHTS**

All of the major sights are within the confines of Old Charlottetown, which makes wander-

ing between them as rewarding as wandering through them.

**Province House National Historic Site**

Charlottetown's centerpiece is the imposing, yet welcoming, neoclassical **Province House** (☎ 902-566-7626; 165 Richmond St; admission free; ☎ 9am-6pm Jul & Aug, to 5pm Jun-Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-May). The symmetry of design is carried throughout, including two brilliant skylights reaching up through the massive sandstone structure. It was here in 1864, within the Confederation Chamber, that 23 representatives of Britain's North American colonies first discussed the creation of Canada (see opposite). Along with being the 'birthplace of Canada,' the site is home to Canada's second-oldest active legislature.

Several rooms have been restored, and in July and August you may find yourself face to face with Canada's first prime minister: actors in period garb wander the halls and regularly perform reenactments of the famous conference. Enjoy the *Great Dream*, a 17-minute film about the monumental 1864 conference.

**Confederation Centre Art Gallery & Museum**

In a modern building that dominates Queen St between Grafton St and Victoria Row at Richmond St, the **Confederation Centre** (☎ 902-628-1864; [www.confederationcentre.com](http://www.confederationcentre.com); 145 Richmond St) serves not only as Charlottetown's theater complex, but as its art and exhibition hall as well. The **art gallery** (admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm mid-Jun-Oct, 11am-5pm Wed-Sat & 1-5pm Sun rest of year) focuses on Canadian Art and has a special exhibit on LM Montgomery. Check the website for gallery exhibits and live performances throughout the year.

**TOP FIVE GENTLE LANDSCAPES OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

- Purple, pink and white lupins taking over the countryside in late June and July
- Pink sands, singing sands, migrating sands
- The green tangle of potato fields
- Red cliffs and green fields dotted with wildflowers meeting a steel-blue sea
- The symphony of fall foliage