

Maine: Acadia National Park

Tour-Only Itinerary

Local lobsterwoman Stefanie Alley has been fishing Maine's frigid waters for decades, and this morning she's invited your group for a dockside chat. Learning about the lobstering life is a perfect prelude to today's walking tour of this remote island outpost, where colorful buoys hung from clapboard houses reflect Acadia's enduring fishing traditions. Of course, local insight is a watchword of your journey, with seasoned wilderness guides who have explored the region for decades. Meanwhile, your taste buds begin anticipating tonight's seafood dinner in Bar Harbor. Here on your hiking tour in Acadia, the East Coast's oldest national park, the settled life and wild nature coexist as they have for centuries—in beautifully landscaped carriage roads and rocky coastal paths, quaint village shops, and boundless vistas of the island-dotted Atlantic.



Highlights

- Travel to Little Cranberry Island by boat and meet with a local lobsterwoman for a window into authentic Maine coastal life.
- Follow the rugged Maine coastline past the roiling Thunder Hole as you trek the highest ocean-edge cliffs in Acadia National Park.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the region's flora, fauna, and dramatic glacial history with veteran wilderness guides.
- Enjoy breathtaking views from the summit of Cadillac Mountain.

On all Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate. Walks average 2 to 8 miles daily with options on most days. The ascents on this tour are short, with the longest being no more than 45 minutes with a maximum elevation gain and loss of up to 540 feet. The walks take you along tidal pools, rocky shores, and wooded trails, so the terrain can be sandy and rocky; or well-worn forested paths and gravel carriage trails. Not all trails have level footing, and you may encounter exposed roots and rocks. Classic coastal Maine sights and flavors are enhanced by the history of Acadia National Park and its tradition of elegant summer vacationing.

DAY 1

Arrival in Bangor

Paradise Hill – Witch Hole Pond Loop; 2-3 miles, easy. Sieur de Monts Spring area, Jessup Path, Hemlock Loop; 4 miles, easy to moderate. Thuya Gardens; 1 mile, easy

Your guides, wearing Country Walkers' shirts, will meet you at the Bangor Aviator Hotel at 9:00 a.m. in the lobby. Please be dressed for walking.

Upon meeting your guides at the hotel this morning, you depart immediately for a one-hour drive to Acadia National Park and proceed directly to the visitor center. An introductory walk along one of the park's many carriage roads leads to Witch Hole Pond, with views along the way of Frenchman Bay and Hull's Cove to the northeast, as well as the distant mountains to the north. In the first half of the 20th century, John D. Rockefeller Jr. donated about one-third of the park's land from his personal estate. He also conceived of and oversaw the construction of the extensive network of carriage roads that wind throughout the park. Today, you can enjoy these walkways with their subtle landscaping and handcrafted stone bridges.

After lunch at a seaside restaurant, enjoy an afternoon walk in the Sieur de Monts Spring area via the Jessup Path. A series of plank bridges skirt an open marsh and provide views of Huguenot Head, Champlain Mountain, and Dorr Mountain. You connect to the Hemlock Loop trail, which dates back 100 years to when these walking paths connected downtown Bar Harbor to Acadia National Park. Well-graded paths and log-and-plank bridges make for firm footing.

Tonight, you enjoy a traditional boiled lobster dinner with all the fixings.

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2

Flying Mountain Trail

1-2 miles, easy to moderate. Beech Mt. North Ridge Trail; 2 miles, moderate OR Ship Harbor Trail; 1-2 miles, easy

Today's walks take place on the "quiet side" of Mount Desert Island, the western, less-traveled side. This morning, you hike Flying Mountain, which rises 284 feet, giving you extraordinary views of Somes Sound below. Enjoy free time in Southwest Harbor before lunch on your own, where you might enjoy a lobster roll. Your guide presents you with two options for this afternoon. For those who want a more challenging option, a walk on Beech Mountain gives an excellent overview of the region. The trail gradually ascends the western flank of the mountain with views of Long Pond and Blue Hill from across the sparkling waters of Blue Hill Bay. At the summit, near a closed fire tower, you look over the towns of Southwest Harbor and Northeast Harbor, the entrance to Somes Sound, and the Cranberry Isles lying offshore to the south. The trail descends some rocky ledges before looping back to the trailhead in Somesville.

If you prefer a more relaxed walk, Ship Harbor Trail offers a view of quintessential Maine coastal scenery. This easy figure-eight trail leads to the tranquil shoreline of Ship Harbor and exits through a cool forest of spruce and cedar trees.

This evening, you dine at your hotel restaurant while taking in the view of the beautiful harbor.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 3

Little Cranberry Island. Independent exploration of Bar Harbor

3-4 miles, easy to moderate

Today you discover one of the secluded islands off Mount Desert's southern coast. After breakfast overlooking the sound, you catch a chartered fishing boat out of Southwest Harbor for an hour-long crossing to Little Cranberry Island. The five Cranberry Isles—Great Cranberry, Little Cranberry (or Isleford), Bear, Baker, and Sutton—are located one to five miles offshore and are named after the low-bush wild cranberries that grow profusely throughout their terrain. The islands' year-round residents, mainly lobstermen and boat builders, are joined each summer by visitors, some of whom have been returning for generations.

Arriving at Little Cranberry Island, one of the island's lobsterwomen will greet you. Gathering by her boat, you'll be regaled with stories of her life on the island and her experiences as a traditional lobsterwoman in Maine. Learn about the area's lobsters, perhaps even with a live subject.

The island's main village provides a glimpse of authentic Maine coastal life from another era, with piers and wooden buildings clustered in a sheltered cove. A quiet road leads up to a grassy bluff and continues through groves of tall firs, passing white clapboard cottages. Your picnic lunch is at a perfect spot overlooking glimmering water and a pebbled beach, with distant sailboats skimming the ocean's surface. Once you've looped back to the village dock, you board a boat for the return trip to Southwest Harbor.

Then it's just a short drive to bustling and quaint Bar Harbor, the island's largest community, where you settle into an in-town resort hotel with a water's-edge marina overlooking Frenchman Bay and the open ocean. You'll have free time this evening to explore the lively town of Bar Harbor, taking the opportunity to visit the town's many shops to purchase souvenirs, or treat yourself to homemade blueberry ice cream. For dinner on your own in Bar Harbor, consider fresh steamed lobster or littleneck clams.

Bar Harbor's New England charm extends from its quaint, historical downtown to its ocean and mountain landscapes. Exploring the winding streets and strolling coastal trails gives you a chance to truly immerse yourself in the area's traditional vibe and warm hospitality.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 4

Jordan Pond

Bubbles Loop; 3-5 miles, easy to moderate

Maine's natural beauty beckons with activities both on land and on the water. Mountain views and coastal scenery blend together in this fascinating region.

After a hearty breakfast, you set off for the day's walk at Jordan Pond, a serene freshwater pond in Acadia National Park's interior. The trail circles the pond, winding through blueberry bushes, clusters of white birch, and shady spruce. At the pond's northern end are two symmetrical hills called the North Bubble and the South Bubble, over 700 and 800 feet high, respectively. The peaks reflect in the pond's pristine water and are also in view throughout the walk. Along the water's edge you may spot a great blue heron or a pair of black-and-white, common loons.

A longer and more challenging option leads to the summits of both Bubbles, where you are rewarded with

views of Eagle Lake, another freshwater pond lying just to the north, as well as Conner's Nubble and Frenchman Bay. Looping back to Jordan Pond, you are ready for a satisfying lunch at the Jordan Pond House Restaurant. This historic teahouse-style restaurant dates from the late 19th century and serves a range of soups and chowders, salads, sandwiches, and its signature popovers.

Returning to Bar Harbor in the mid to late afternoon, you can take full advantage of the resort amenities at the hotel, such as the seaside heated pool and Jacuzzi, and then continue the evening at your own pace by strolling into Bar Harbor for dinner on your own.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 5

Great Head Loop. Independent exploration of Bar Harbor

2 miles, easy to moderate. Ocean Path; 2 miles, easy or Gorham Mountain Trail; 2 miles, easy to moderate, 500-ft. elevation gain and loss

Set out on the morning's walks on the ocean side of Mount Desert Island, starting at sheltered Sand Beach, a gorgeous 300-yard long beach nestled between Great Head and Newport Cove. Here, the constant Atlantic surf has created unique pastel sand, composed of tiny, pulverized shell fragments. Departing from Sand Beach, you join the Ocean Drive Trail, justifiably one of the park's most popular trails—dramatic views stretch along the oceanfront from Sand Beach to Otter Point. In the middle, the level gravel trail drops to Thunder Hole, named for the sound of the water crashing into a narrow channel in the coastal ledge. This historic trail, which was part of the original trail network dating from the late 19th century, was completely restored and resurfaced about 10 years ago. The trail rises to Otter Cliffs, the highest ocean-edge cliffs in the park, where you'll find Baker's Island in full view to the south, and a slice of Little Cranberry Island to the west.

The Great Head loop departs from the eastern end of Sand Beach and follows the peninsula's headland, with views of the beach to the south, the Ocean Path, and Otter Cliffs. As you climb through windblown grass to its highest point at 145 feet, waves crash below; offshore, pleasure and fishing boats ply the eight miles of open water framed by the Schoodic Peninsula to the east.

This afternoon you have two walks to choose from. The first option is a hike along the Gorham Mountain

Trail, with sweeping views of the morning's trails along the Ocean Path, Sand Beach, and Great Head. You gradually ascend open ledges featuring ridge-top panoramic views as you follow the ridge that runs north to Champlain Mountain, part of the chain of mountains closest to the ocean. The second option is to follow the Ocean Path along a beautiful and dramatic stretch of coastline between Sand Beach and Otter Point.

You have the rest of the afternoon to relax before you celebrate your Acadian adventure at your inn's restaurant, toasting your exploration of this stunning region over creative cuisine.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6

Cadillac Mountain and North Ridge. Your *Maine: Acadia National Park* tour concludes

1-2 miles, moderate

No visit to Acadia is complete without a trip to the top of Cadillac Mountain. Not only is it the highest point in the park at 1,530 feet, but Cadillac Mountain also has the distinction of being the highest point on the entire North American Atlantic coastline. This morning, you drive to a point where the North Ridge Trail intersects the road, to hike the final mile to the treeless summit, which offers breathtaking views over Bar Harbor, Frenchman Bay, and the open waters. Named after Sieur de Cadillac, a 17th-century French explorer, the mountain appears bare and desert-like when viewed from the ocean, which is why Cadillac's compatriot and contemporary, Samuel de Champlain, called the entire island "Mont Desert."

After stopping for lunch, you arrive at the Bangor Airport by mid-afternoon for your onward travels.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

What's Included

Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓
12 on-tour meals: 5 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 3 dinners	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓
Telescopic walking sticks provided on tour	✓