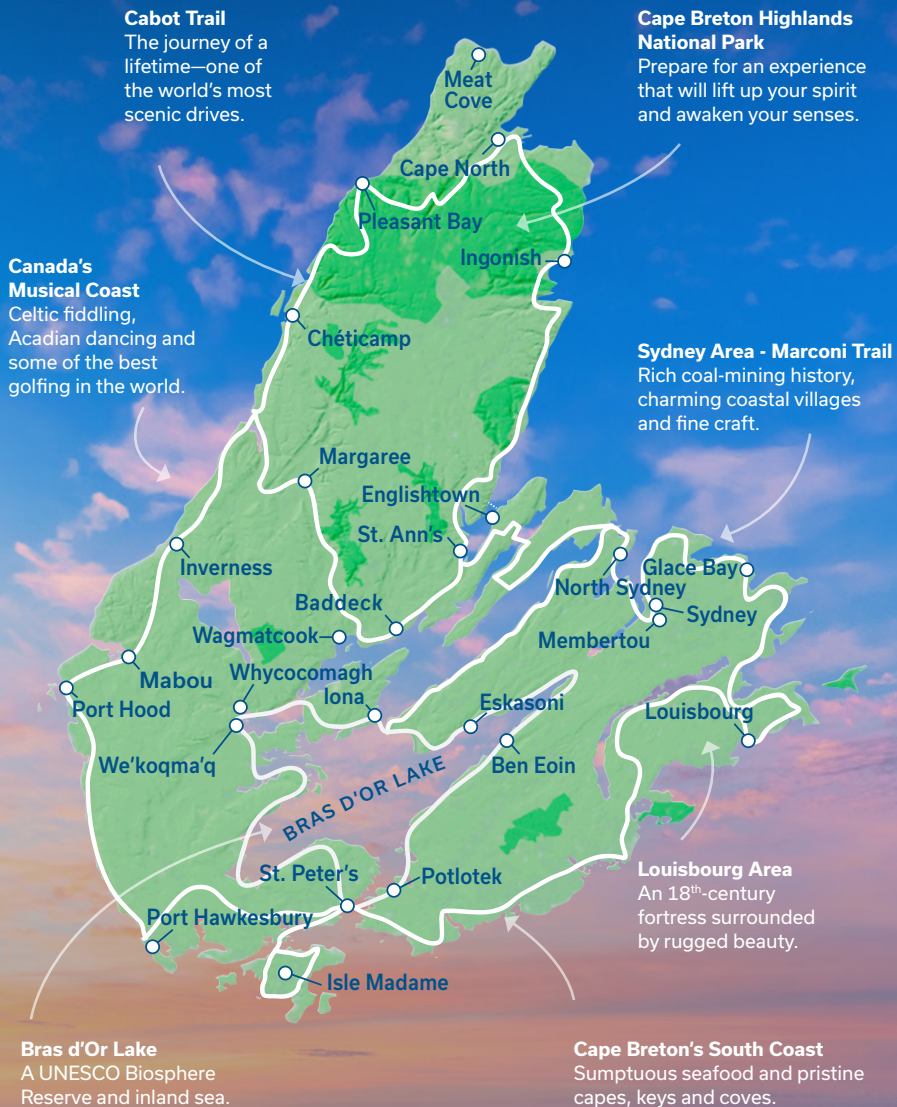


Cape Breton Island

your heart will never leave.



EXPERIENCE GUIDE



Welcome to Cape Breton Island

At the northern tip of Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Island is a magical place of exceptional scenery, delicious seafood, rich culture and a spectacular coastline.

There's so much to see and do on the Island, so it's best if we break it down for you into seven experience categories: Outdoor Adventure, Coastal Adventure, Living Cultures, Culinary Experiences, Live Music and the Arts, History and Golf.

We recommend spending at least five to seven days on the Island for a full experience. And you may return home after your vacation, but your heart will never leave.



Cabot Trail



Outdoor Adventure

Our trails, hills and mountains provide a wealth of options for the outdoor adventurer. Hike in Cape Breton Highlands National Park to a spectacular view of the Cabot Trail as it winds along the coastline. Rent a bike and explore Celtic Shores Coastal Trail as it takes you through communities along the west coast of the Island. Have your camera ready for up-close encounters with whales or maybe a moose.





Outdoor Adventure

■ Take a Guided Tour

Venture off the beaten path and discover Cape Breton's wild side with the guidance of a local expert. From scenic trails that lead to hidden waterfalls, to dramatic coastal drives, each tour is a chance to connect more deeply with the Island's natural wonders and rich culture. Our guides bring these landscapes to life, sharing stories, insider tips and a passion for their home that make every excursion both memorable and rewarding. Whether you're looking for a stress-free way to see the best of Cape Breton or a chance to uncover its best-kept secrets, a guided tour promises an experience you'll carry with you long after you leave.

■ Hiking

Cape Breton Island is a hiker's paradise — a rugged landscape that rewards every step. From Highland crests to low-tide beaches and old-growth forests, breathtaking trails are everywhere. Along the Cabot Trail, Cape Breton Highlands National Park offers some of Eastern Canada's most iconic hikes. Explore 950 square kilometres of wilderness, with trails that lead to cliffside lookouts, forest paths and lush river canyons. Each step brings a new view, a fresh challenge and a deeper connection to the wild heart of our Island.

■ Cycling

Cape Breton Island is home to some of North America's most breathtaking cycling routes and trails. From climbing the winding peaks of the Cabot Trail surrounded by vibrant fall foliage, to cruising the beachside boardwalks of the Celtic Shores Coastal Trail, every ride offers unforgettable scenery. With e-bike rentals available in many locations across the Island, these legendary routes are now more accessible to riders of all skill levels—so you can focus on soaking in the views, not just breaking a sweat.

■ Chase a Waterfall

Every season is waterfall season on Cape Breton Island! While spring brings a rush of melting snow and rain — making the falls even more dramatic — you can discover their magic all year long. From hidden cascades deep in the forest to powerful drops that thunder into pools below, each waterfall offers a chance to connect with nature's raw energy. Grab your camera, follow a trail and let the sound of falling water guide you toward some of the Island's most beautiful and secluded spots.

■ Unique Camping

From Mongolian yurts and geodesic domes to secluded glamping pods and canvas-covered retreats, Cape Breton Island is full of extraordinary ways to connect with nature. Wake up to cliffside views, fall asleep under a canopy of stars, or detach completely in a restful spot deep in the forest — each offers a chance to make your stay truly one-of-a-kind.



Gairloch Mountain Falls



Franey Mountain



Bay St. Lawrence



Coastal Adventure

Cape Breton Island has some of the most dramatic coastlines in the world. A great way to explore it is by kayak, giving you an intimate and engaging experience with your surroundings. Take a relaxing sailing tour on the Bras d'Or Lake, an inland saltwater sea and UNESCO Biosphere, or adventure onto the Atlantic to see whales, seals and seabirds, and our incredible coastal vistas.



■ Watersports & Adventures

Get up close and personal with Cape Breton Island's waters — where every stroke brings a new view, a rush of peace, or a spark of adventure. Glide across sheltered lakes and dramatic shores on a stand-up paddleboard, or let your kayak carry you alongside majestic cliff formations, following its path toward hidden coves and inlets. Tube down the gentle current of the world-famous Margaree River with friends for a more laid-back ride. Or join a guided kayak tour for an intimate exploration led by someone who knows these waters best. Catch a wave and try your hand at surfing along the Island's wild coastline — whether you're a first-timer or a veteran looking for the next break, there's no better way to experience Cape Breton — one ripple at a time.

■ Beaches

Take a dip in the warm, salty waters of the Gulf on Cape Breton's west side — where the water's toastier than the Atlantic. Stroll Inverness Beach for sea glass and vintage pottery, or catch a wave at Point Michaud, the Island's best surf spot, before settling in for a picture-perfect sunset. Across the Island, you'll find beautiful beaches for every mood — Port Hood, West Mabou and Chimney Corner along the Gulf, Black Brook, Dingwall, Kennington Cove and Ingonish on the Atlantic, and Marble Mountain, Grove's Point and Kidston Island on the sheltered shores of Bras d'Or Lake.

■ Fishing

Whether you're tying a fly to cast for wild Atlantic salmon on the Margaree River, reeling in rainbow trout on the Bras d'Or Lake, or heading offshore with an experienced fishing charter, Cape Breton Island offers endless opportunities to connect with the water. Explore renowned fishing spots in the Cape Breton Highlands National Park or hire a local guide to help you find the perfect catch and sharpen your skills. With miles of coastline, rivers and lakes, our Island is the ideal place to hook your first catch or master the sport.

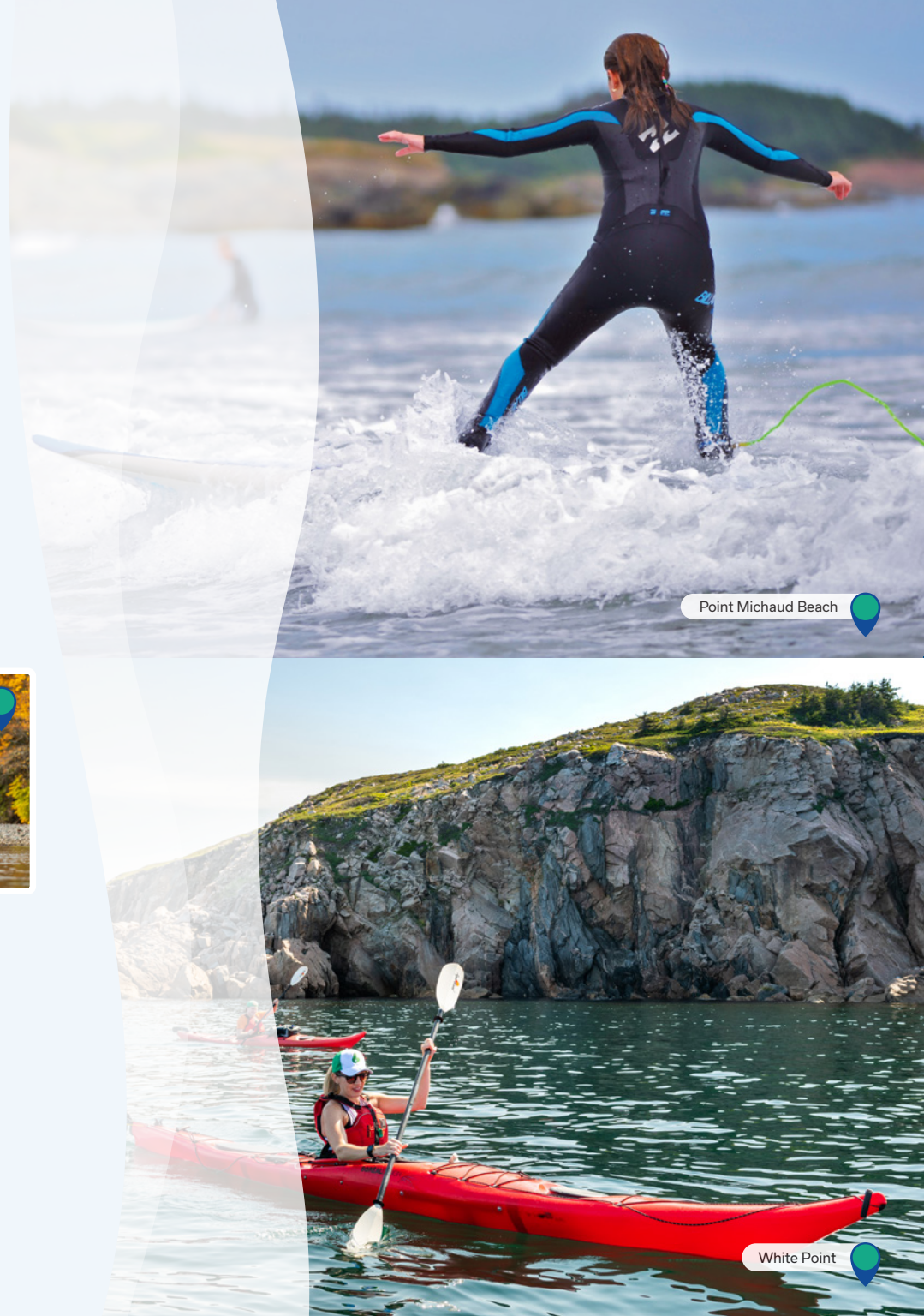


■ Sailing Adventures

Discover Cape Breton Island by water with sailing and boat charters. Glide across Bras d'Or Lake at sunset, soaking in golden skies. For a deeper escape, try an overnight charter—sleep under the stars and wake to the sea's gentle rhythm. Many tours include live music, local fare and drinks, creating a relaxed, intimate vibe. Whether you want a peaceful sail, lively evening or multi-day adventure, there's a tour for every traveller.

■ Coastal Wildlife Tours

Get up close with Cape Breton's majestic coastline on a tour of your choice. Choose between whale watching or bird watching adventures with expert guides. Spend the day spotting whales, dolphins and seals or watching nesting seabirds—from charming puffins to soaring gannets—that bring these shores to life. Whether bouncing over surf in a zodiac or gliding through sheltered waters, these intimate wildlife encounters reveal the wild heart of Cape Breton Island.





Goat Island, Eskasoni



Living Cultures

The Mi'kmaq have lived here since time immemorial and their culture continues to thrive with the legends, music and stories that have been passed down over generations. The Acadians came to the Island from the mid to late 1700s, adding their vibrant French culture and *joie-de-vivre* to the Cape Breton Island story. Additionally, from the mid-1700s to late 1800s, the Island welcomed Gaelic immigrants from Scotland who brought their language and culture.

Mi'kmaq (Indigenous), Acadian, Gaelic and many other ancestries are central to Cape Breton Island's identity, but industrialization and globalization brought more people from around the globe, creating a diverse multicultural society.



■ Mi'kmaq

Unama'ki, otherwise known as Cape Breton Island, has been home to Mi'kmaq people from time immemorial. The Mi'kmaq enrich the Island with their legends, art, music, spirituality, history and language. In Unama'ki the culture is thriving with five Indigenous communities. You can immerse yourself in this rich culture with Eskasoni Cultural Journeys, Membertou Heritage Park, Wagmatcook Cultural Centre, Canal Landing and the Skye River Trail in We'koqma'q.

■ Acadian

Since 1713, the Acadian spirit and joie de vivre has thrived among Nova Scotia's Acadian French population. Today's Acadians are descendants of the first European settlers. On Cape Breton Island, the Chéticamp and Isle Madame/Louisdale regions are hubs of this vibrant culture. Mask making at La Centre de la Mi-Carême, rug hooking at Les Trois Pignons, cultural experiences at Centre la Picasso, and music and dance performances in various venues are just some of the ways you can celebrate the rich and storied history of Cape Breton's Acadian culture. And be sure to look for traditional Acadian dishes such as fish cakes or meat pies at eateries in those regions.

■ Gaelic

In the 1800s, Gaelic-speaking immigrants, mainly from the highlands and islands of Scotland with a smaller number from Ireland, came by the tens of thousands and made Cape Breton Island their home. To this very day, Gaelic is spoken at the Gaelic College / Colaisde na Gàidhlig, the Highland Village / Baile nan Gàidheal and in a number of communities. To participate in the culture, visit the aforementioned sites, join in a square dance, sing along at a milling frolic, learn the art of weaving or research your Gaelic roots.



Centre de la Mi-Carême, Chéticamp



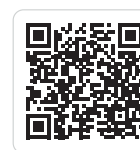
Goat Island, Eskasoni

Highland Village Museum/Baile nan Gàidheal, Iona



Culinary Experiences

Cape Breton Island is recognized among culinary enthusiasts as a "must-eat" region for its renowned shellfish. The finest lobster and snow crab in the world to come from the cold coastal waters off Cape Breton. From foraging for mushrooms to buying grass-fed Highland beef at a farmers market, the Island celebrates local ingredients, used on the menus of many local restaurants. Pair your meal with a local craft beer, North America's first Single Malt Whisky or rum aged to perfection at the Fortress of Louisbourg.





Culinary Experiences

■ Eat Local

Forage for market fresh goods. Experience the dry-aged flavour of grass-fed Highland beef. Dine on some of the world's finest lobster—straight from the wharf. Whether you visit a bustling public house, community lobster boil, or an intimate bistro, you'll taste our Island in each bite.

■ Craft Beer, Wine & Spirits

Along the Nova Scotia Good Cheer Trail, you'll find our flavour. Sample unfiltered craft beers farm-side. Let the robust notes of North America's first Single Malt Whisky dance on your tongue. Or, get a taste of history with a colonial rum experience at the Fortress of Louisbourg.

■ World-Class Shellfish

A must-eat destination for seafood lovers. The finest lobsters and snow crab in the world come from the cold coastal waters off our Island. Sustainably sourced from ship to shore, savour Cape Breton Island's renowned shellfish on your next culinary adventure.





Live Music & the Arts

There are few elements of our Cape Breton identity that are as vibrant and pronounced as our affinity and enthusiasm for live music. With more fiddlers per capita than anywhere else in the world, Cape Breton Island is a hot spot for Celtic music and is also known for its famed songwriters and singers in many genres of music. Music is the heart and soul of Cape Breton Island and you will find tunes around every turn!

As you travel through our communities, you will also meet artisans at work creating one-of-a-kind masterpieces and you can even try your hand in the process.





Live Music & the Arts

■ Artisans, Studios & Gift Shops

Meet dynamic artisans as you journey through Cape Breton's vibrant communities. From clay potters on the North Shore and Highland rug hookers to downtown art galleries, the Island is brimming with artful surprises and one-of-a-kind masterpieces waiting to be discovered. Explore creative workshops and studios scattered across the Island. Whether you're searching for the perfect keepsake or eager to try your hand at your own artistic creation, artist-led workshops and hands-on experiences offer something for everyone. Pick up a copy of the Artisan Trail Map to uncover the full list of studios and plan your creative adventure.

■ Live Music and Dancing

With more fiddlers per capita than anywhere else, music is everywhere on Cape Breton Island — the heart and soul of our community. Experience the lively tradition of square dancing, or join a céilidh (pronounced Kay-lee), where Celtic music, dancing and singing bring the Island's spirit to life. Catch live tunes at community concerts and world-renowned festivals for a true taste of Cape Breton's vibrant culture.

■ Learn the Rhythm of the Island

Why just watch when you can join in? Across Cape Breton Island, hands-on workshops invite you to dive into our living culture—through music, dance, language and craft. Learn to play the fiddle, step to a square dance beat, explore Gaelic or try your hand at traditional and contemporary crafts with skilled local artisans. Whether you're picking up a new instrument or shaping something with your own two hands, these welcoming classes offer a chance to connect, create and carry a piece of the Island with you.

■ Live Theatre

Experience the magic of live theatre on Cape Breton Island. From intimate plays and heartfelt storytelling to vibrant musicals and powerful performances, our stages bring the Island's culture and heritage to life. Let the music, dance and stories captivate you as you immerse yourself in unforgettable shows at historic theatres and playhouses across the Island. Don't just hear our stories—live them.





Local History

Travel back to the 1700s at the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site where world powers once fought for control of a continent. French soldiers march through the streets of the town as ladies and gentlemen dance in formal parlours. Cannon fire shakes the ground as harpsichord tunes mingle with the aroma of baking bread drifting from the stone bakery.

Delve into the mind of a genius at the Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site to see how the inventor helped shape the modern world, from communication to flight to artificial respiration. Explore one of our many other museums and heritage sites.



■ National Historic Sites

One small Island with big impact. Glimpse into the mind of a genius. Have a blast firing a 17th-century cannon. Stand on the same shores that launched the first transatlantic wireless message. Through four National Historic Sites, discover Cape Breton Island's history from a global perspective.

■ Museums & Heritage Sites

Step into the stories that shaped Cape Breton Island. From the age of coal and steel to the golden era of rail, our heritage is brought to life through immersive exhibits and hands-on experiences. Walk in the footsteps of miners, engineers and storytellers whose resilience and innovation built our communities. Explore a wide range of museums—from those celebrating our industrial roots to others that reveal the Island's deep natural history, local wildlife and diverse cultures. Each one offers a window into how our past continues to shape the Cape Breton of today.

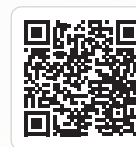




Golf

Golf was invented for places like Cape Breton Island. Tee off at our Island's many courses, designed to complement the stunning terrain, surrounded by sweeping cliffs and majestic ocean views.

The game of golf is about places — the challenge, beauty and prestige of the course. There are approximately 35,000 golf courses in the world, but only a selection of these embrace the true spirit of the game. Cape Breton Island is one of those places with three courses in *Golf Digest's* World's 100 Greatest Golf Courses.



■ Where the Land Shapes the Game

Cape Breton Island doesn't just host golf—it defines it. Shaped by rugged coastlines, highland contours and inland seas, this landscape has inspired some of the world's most acclaimed courses. From the windswept beauty of Cabot Cliffs to the coastal rhythm of Cabot Links and the historic charm of Cape Breton Highlands Links, each course offers a masterclass in how terrain can elevate the game.

Along the tranquil shores of the Bras d'Or Lake, Dundee, Bell Bay and The Lakes Golf Club combine challenging play with striking scenery. And on the western edge, Le Portage Golf Club delivers unforgettable views where the Gulf of St. Lawrence meets Chéticamp's dramatic mountains. On Cape Breton Island, every round is shaped by something greater.





Must-see Places

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