



Nova Scotia

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Best Places to Eat

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- ➔ 2 Doors Down (p342)
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Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Keltic Lodge at the Highlands (p382)
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- ➔ Maple Inn (p371)
- ➔ Jumping Mouse Campground (p383)

Why Go?

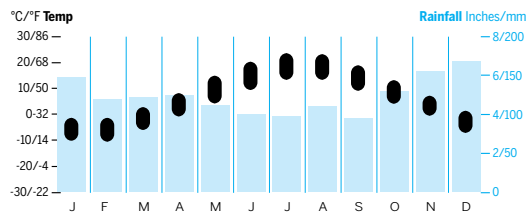
If Nova Scotia were a film, its protagonists would be rugged yet kind-hearted, burnt by the wind and at one with the sea. It would be shot against a backdrop of rolling green fields and high sea-cliffs; its soundtrack would feature fiddles, drums and evocative piano scores; and its plot would be a spirited romp around themes of history, community and family.

Nova Scotia is the real deal. Its wild and wonderfully varied landscape is home to a diverse population of resourceful, hospitable folk, who love to sing and dance but who'd happily break you at dodgeball in a second.

Short-lived summers are a sheer delight, as the locals emerge from the cold to celebrate life: accommodations fill fast and prices hike. As difficult as the late spring and peak fall conditions are becoming to predict, these times afford spectacular scenery and a milder climate, while long, white winters are harsh but beautiful affairs.

When to Go

Halifax



May & Jun Beat the summer price hike and feel like you have the province to yourself.

Jul & Aug Wildflowers bloom as temperatures and prices rise, while days go on forever.

Sep & Oct Locals make the most of stunning fall foliage before the long winter comes.

History

From time immemorial, the Mi'kmaq First Nation lived throughout present-day Nova Scotia. When the French established the first European settlement at Port Royal (today's Annapolis Royal) in 1605, Grand Chief Membertou offered them hospitality and became a frequent guest of Samuel de Champlain.

That close relationship with the French led to suspicions by the British after they gained control of Nova Scotia, and rewards were offered for Mi'kmaq scalps. Starting in 1755 most French-speaking Acadians were deported to Louisiana (where they became known as Cajuns) and elsewhere for refusing to swear allegiance to the British Crown.

Nova Scotia was repopulated by some 35,000 United Empire Loyalists retreating from the American Revolution, including a small number of African slaves owned by Loyalists and freed Black Loyalists. New England planters settled other communities and from 1773 waves of Highland Scots arrived.

Most Nova Scotians trace their ancestry to the British Isles, as a look at the lengthy 'Mac' and 'Mc' sections of the phone book easily confirms. Acadians who managed to return from Louisiana after 1764 found their lands in the Annapolis Valley occupied. They settled instead along the French Shore between Yarmouth and Digby, on Cape Breton Island around Chéticamp, and on Isle Madame. Today Acadians make up some 12% of the population, although not as many still identify French as their first language. African Nova Scotians make up about 5% of the population. Nova Scotia has close to 34,000 people of Aboriginal identity, of which around 22,000 are First Nations people, predominantly from 18 different Mi'kmaq communities.

Local Culture

With nearly 8000km of coastline, Nova Scotia has a culture that revolves around the sea. Historically, it has been a hard-working region of coal mines and fisheries. The current culture is still very blue-collar but, with the decline of the primary industries, many young Nova Scotians are forced to leave their province in search of work.

Perhaps because of the long winters and hard-working days, an enormous number of Nova Scotians play music. Family get-togethers, particularly Acadian and Scottish, consist of strumming, fiddling, foot-tapping and dancing.

FAST FACTS

- Population: 942,930
- Area: 55,284 sq km
- Capital: Halifax
- Quirky fact: Has the only tidal power plant in the western hemisphere

Getting There & Away

AIR

There are multiple flights daily between **Halifax Stanfield International Airport** (p346) and Toronto, Montréal, Ottawa, Saint John and Moncton, and less frequent flights to Boston and New York. In summer and fall there are direct flights to London and Iceland. Airlines covering these routes include Air Canada, Condor, Delta, Iceland Air, United and Westjet.

PAL Airlines (PB; ☎ 800-563-2800; www.palairlines.ca) can be useful for getting to Nova Scotia from regional locations in Quebec, New Brunswick and Newfoundland.

Air St-Pierre (PJ; ☎ 877-277-7765; www.airsaintpierre.com) also flies to the French territories of St Pierre and Miquelon from **Sydney JA Douglas McCurdy Airport** (YQY; ☎ 902-564-7720; www.sydneyairport.ca; 280 Silver Dart Way), which otherwise only services domestic routes.

BOAT

New Brunswick

Bay Ferries (☎ 877-762-7245; www.ferries.ca) operates boats from Digby to Saint John, NB (adult/child one-way from \$36/20, from 2½ hours). Rates for vehicles start at \$107 (including a fuel surcharge).

Newfoundland

Marine Atlantic (☎ 800-341-7981; www.marine-atlantic.ca) ferries ply the route between North Sydney and Port aux Basques, Newfoundland (adult/child one-way from \$44/21, six to eight hours), year round. In summer, ferries also travel to Argentia (adult/child one-way from \$116/65, 16 hours) on Newfoundland's east coast. Reservations are required for either trip.

Factor in an extra \$114 to bring a standard-sized vehicle to Port aux Basques, and an extra \$203 to Argentia.

Prince Edward Island

Bay Ferries cruises between Caribou, near Pictou, and Wood Islands on Prince Edward Island (PEI) up to nine times daily (adult/child from \$19/free, 1¼ hours). A standard vehicle costs \$81. No reservations are required, but it's wise to show up half an hour before departure.