



Nova Scotia

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Best Places to Eat

- » Fid (p39)
- » Jane's on the Common (p39)
- » Fleur de Sel (p50)
- » Red Shoe Pub (p77)
- » Lobster suppers (at town halls and churches around the province)

Best Places to Stay

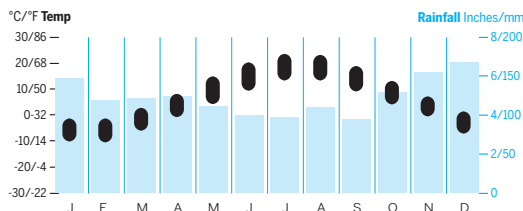
- » Waverley Inn (p38)
- » Desbarres Manor (p87)
- » Lightkeeper's Kitchen & Guest House (p70)
- » Cranberry Cove Inn (p86)
- » Digby Backpackers Hostel (p58)

Why Go?

At first glance, Nova Scotia appears sweet as a storybook: lupin-studded fields, gingerbread-like houses, picture-perfect lighthouses and lightly lapping waves on sandy shores make you want to wrap it all up and give it to a cuddly kid as a gift. Then another reality creeps up on you: this is also the raw Canada of fishermen braving icy seas, coal miners, moose, horseflies and hockey. Even so, locals remain the most down-to-earth folk you'll ever meet; Scottish, Acadian or Mi'kmaq, they all enjoy a drink, a song, a dance and a new face to share it with. During daylight hours it's easy to discover empty coastal beach trails and wilderness paths through mixed forest to vistas with briny breezes. For something more cosmopolitan, head to Halifax for some world-class dining and a rocking music scene.

When to Go

Halifax



June to August
Wildflowers carpet the country while whales come in close to feed

September & October
Trees aflame with golds and reds provide the backdrop to fall music festivals

August to November
Put on a thick wet-suit, hood and booties to surf icy hurricane swells

History

From time immemorial, the Mi'kmaq 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 considerable 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 'Cajuns') and elsewhere for refusing to swear allegiance to the British Crown (see the boxed text, p65).

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 also freed Black Loyalists. New England planters settled other communities and, starting in 1773, waves of Highland Scots arrived in northern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island.

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 18% of the population, though not as many actually speak French. African Nova Scotians make up about 4% of the population. There are approximately 20,000 Mi'kmaq in 18 different communities, which are concentrated around Truro and the Bras d'Or lakes on Cape Breton Island.

Local Culture

With nearly 8000km of coastline, Nova Scotia has a culture that revolves around the sea. Historically, this 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 Scot-

tish, consist of strumming, fiddling, foot-tapping and dancing.

i Getting There & Away

Air

Most flights go to/from Halifax but there's also an international airport in Sydney on Cape Breton. Airlines include Air Canada, Air Canada Jazz, WestJet, United and Continental. There are multiple flights daily between Halifax and cities such as Toronto, Montréal, Ottawa, Saint John (New Brunswick), Moncton and Boston (Massachusetts). In summer and fall there's a weekly direct flight to London.

Bus

Acadian Lines (☎902-454-9321, 800-567-5151; www.acadianbus.com) provides a bus service through the Maritimes and connects Voyager buses from Quebec and Ontario, and Greyhound from the USA (see p264). From Halifax, destinations include Charlottetown (\$70, 5½ hours, two daily), Moncton (\$57, four hours, three daily) and Bangor (Maine; \$105, 11 hours, daily), where there are connections for Boston and New York. All fares for Acadian Lines are tax-inclusive, and there are discounts for children aged five to 11 years (50%), students (15%) and seniors (25%).

Contactable through Acadian Lines, **Trius Lines** (☎902-454-9321, 800-567-5151) travels along the South Shore from Halifax to Yarmouth (\$50, 5½ hours, daily) with connections to the ferries (below). There are discounts for students (15%) and seniors (25%) and for purchasing return tickets.

Boat

NEW BRUNSWICK Bay Ferries (☎888-249-7245; www.bayferries.com; adult/child under 6yr/child 6-13yr/senior \$40/5/25/\$30, car/motorcycle/bicycle \$80/50/10) has a three-hour trip from Saint John (New Brunswick) to Digby. Off-season discounts and various packages are available.

NEWFOUNDLAND Marine Atlantic (☎800-341-7981; www.marine-atlantic.ca) operates ferries year-round to Port aux Basques (Newfoundland) from North Sydney (adult/child/car \$29/14/81.50). Daytime crossings take between five and six hours, and overnight crossings take about seven hours. Cabins and reclining chairs cost extra. In summer, you can opt for a 14-hour ferry ride (adult/child \$80/40.25, car/motorcycle \$165/83.50) to Argentia on Newfoundland's east coast. Reservations are required for either trip.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND Northumberland Ferries (☎902-566-3838, 888-249-7245; www.peiferry.com; adult/child \$16/free, car/motorcycle/bicycle incl passengers \$64/40/20)