

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

## DAY 1

Arrive in Halifax anytime before 4:30 p.m.

Arrive Halifax any time before 4:30 p.m. We'll meet as a group for the first time at 5:30 p.m. at our Halifax hotel for a welcome and introductions. We'll continue getting to know each other as we go out for our first dinner together. Since many of us will be tired from traveling, bedtime is likely to be early tonight - unless of course, we can find some music to listen to.

Overnight: Halifax (D)

## DAY 2

Walking in Halifax and Waterfront, visit Peggy's Cove

We'll start our trip with exploring the town of Halifax. A charming coastal town that offers great views, food, and historical legacy. We will enjoy a walk throughout the city and near the waterfront to get acquainted.

In the afternoon we'll visit Peggy's Cove, a small fishing village that is one of Nova Scotia's iconic sites and home to the most photographed lighthouse in the world. We'll also have time to marvel at the stone sculpture William deGarthe made in his backyard as a memorial to the fishermen that have lived here for hundreds of years. Later we'll go for a beautiful hike (about 1.2 miles) through the coastal barrens, learning about how the area was formed by glaciers 12,000 years ago, its unique vegetation, and the wildlife that call it home.

Hiking: 1.5 hours. Driving: about 1.5 hours. Overnight: Halifax (B, L, D)

## DAY 3

Kayaking on south shore, visit Lunenburg, drive to Wolfville and Annapolis Valley

This morning we leave Halifax and head for the south shore. Our day starts with seeing Nova Scotia from the perspective of the sea as we kayak along the coast, exploring inlets and islands, and watching the varied birdlife. No previous kayaking experience is needed. After a morning of paddling, we drive to the town of Lunenburg. Known for its colorful houses, well-preserved architecture, and interesting history, the old part of the town is a UNESCO World Heritage site. After a picnic lunch you'll have some time to wander through some of the many art galleries and shops, the Knaut-Rhuland house museum, the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic, or a micro-distillery. In the late afternoon, we'll head north to the Annapolis Valley area, the location of the Bay of Fundy and its famously high tides, and also one of the centers of Acadian history.

Kayaking: 2 hours. Walking: 1 hour. Driving: 2.5 hours driving. Overnight: Old Orchard Inn, Wolfville (B, L, D)

## DAY 4

Hike Jodrey Trail, visit to a winery

Today we'll hike the Jodrey Trail in Blomidon Provincial Park, a well-graded trail of 4.5 miles through forest that emerges onto an absolutely stunning bluff with magnificent views of the Minas Basin below. The trail up is a steady and mostly moderate climb, after which it is mostly flat. The footing is generally good with some grass, roots and rocks and it may be muddy in parts if it has rained recently.

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After a picnic lunch and good rest, we return the way we came. With its cool climate, long summers, and rich soil, the Annapolis Valley area has recently become a center for the production of Nova Scotian wine. This afternoon we'll visit one of the many wineries located here and learn more about the wine they make here with a wine tasting. If we time our return to our lodging right, there may well be time for a swim before a dinner on your own in Wolfville.

Hiking: 4 hours, 5 miles. Driving: 1 hour. Overnight: Old Orchard Inn, Wolfville (B, L)

## DAY 5

Visit Grand Pre National Historic Site, drive to Cape Breton, short hike

We start the morning with a visit to the Grand Pre National Historic Site. Grand Pre, the largest Acadian community in the 1750s, was destroyed during the mass deportations by the British. Immortalized in the famous poem "Evangeline" by William Wadsworth Longfellow, the deportations occurred after the Acadians refused to take an unconditional oath of loyalty to the British during the British-French conflict. The movie and exhibits at the Center leave us with a much better understanding of this devastating history and its legacy.

We'll then head to Cape Breton, considered by many to be the crown jewel of Nova Scotia with its dramatic coastlines, abundant wildlife on both land and sea, striking scenery, and Gaelic culture. It's definitely a drive today but Cape Breton is well worth it! Our route takes us along the Trans Canada Highway; beautiful in its own right. We will stop on our way to have a picnic lunch by a river where we can dip our feet, all while surrounded by a towering coniferous forest. In the evening we will attend a Ceilidh in Baddeck to hear local musicians and learn about the history of the Gaelic music brought here by the Scottish settlers and how it has shaped the culture of Cape Breton Island.

Hiking: 1 - 2 hours. Driving: 4.5 - 5 hours. Overnight: Silver Dart Lodge, Baddeck, Cape Breton (B, L, D)

## DAY 6

Drive Cabot Trail, Whale Watching, and hike Le Chemin du Buttereau & MacIntosh Brook

Today we start our circumnavigation of the Cabot Trail, considered one of the most scenic drives in North America with its loop around Cape Breton Highlands National Park. We drive through mixed forest and the Margaree Valley, which is home to one of Canada's Premier salmon rivers. We will make a brief stop in the town of Cheticamp, where we may notice a strong Acadian Culture and presence. We'll stop at the Visitor Center and then continue on into the Park, making stops to take photos of the magnificent scenery. Of course, there is no better way to see and experience Cape Breton than by foot.

After soaking in the views, we'll hike the 2.9 mile Le Chemin du Buttereau trail. Along the way, we'll trace the footsteps of Acadian pioneers. Along the trail, we'll view the ChÃ©copicamp River, old pastures, small mammals and birds.

Returning to the van, we continue driving across the highlands with its vast expanse of mountain plateaus and glacial valleys. We then arrive at the quaint little harbor village of Pleasant Bay, one of the best places in Canada to go whale watching. Many species of whales can be seen in these rich waters, including Minke, Humpback, Fin and Pilot whales. Our lodging tonight is situated right near a quiet beach on the Atlantic Ocean and if you've been wanting to swim in the ocean, this is the time!

After watching the gentle giants, we'll hike one final trail for the day; MacIntosh Brook. This short, 1.1 mile hike will allow us to gently stroll along mature hardwood forest and babbling brook, only to view the falls themselves at the end.

Hiking: 2-3 hours. Whale Watching: 2-3 hours. Driving: 2 hours. Overnight: Markland Resort Dingwall, Cape Breton (B, L, D) \*Please note: The Markland Resort has 1 sofa sleeper and 1 bed in each room. You won't be spending much time in your room with the stunning ocean views anyway!

## DAY 7

Continue hiking in Cape Breton Highlands NP

Another day packed with fun and beauty! We continue our journey on the Cabot Trail, we make a stop for a morning 1.4 mi (loop) hike. The scenic "Jack Pine"



trail overlooks the Atlantic coastline and winds through a post-fire jack pine stand. After having a picnic at Black Brook Beach, we enjoy our second hike of the day. The 2.4 mi (loop) Middle Head trail follows a long, narrow peninsula separating two ocean bays, ending on headland cliffs overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, Cape Smokey and Ingonish Island. There are opportunities to see seabirds, seals, whales and eagles, as well as fishing boats in the early summer. We then drive through Ingonish and over Smokey Mountain, one of the highlights along this famous drive.

Hiking: 2.5 hours. Driving: 2 hours. Overnight: Cabot Shore Resort, Indian Brook (B, L, D)

**DAY 8**

**Hiking, Puffin Boat Tour, Exploring Baddeck**

In the morning, we'll enjoy a 2.3 mile hike on the Red Island Trail. We'll start out at the St. Anne's Bay and eventually find ourselves on the cobblestone beach viewing the MacDonalds Pond. We'll finish the loop hike in the forest, keeping our eyes peeled for wild mushrooms and other fungi. In the early afternoon, we'll enjoy a unique experience - a puffin boat tour! We'll be on the lookout for the marine birds, and hopefully see playful puffins, seals, eagles, and various other sea birds! We'll learn about the puffin and why it calls this part of Nova Scotia home. After the boat tour, we'll arrive in the town of Baddeck. We'll enjoy shopping, live music, and views of the nearby Kidston Island. After a day full of views and learning, we'll enjoy our final farewell lobster dinner; a tasty treat well-earned.

Hiking: 1 - 2 hours. Boat tour: 2.5 hours. Driving: 1 - 2 hours. Overnight: Inverary Resort, Baddeck, Cape Breton (B, L, D)

**DAY 9**

**Return to airport**

Today is the final day of our trip, so after breakfast we will make our way back to the Halifax airport. Along the way, about 4 hours driving, we will stop and stretch our legs and have lunch (on your own). We will be back to the Halifax airport by 1:00 PM, so plan to book flights for 3:00 PM or later.

Driving: 4 hours. (B)