



ROAD TRIP



BY SANDRA PHINNEY

THE **UNDISCOVERED** MARITIMES

Travelling in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, you quickly discover that roots run deep. It's visible in the eyes of Maritimers, spawned by the legacy of Canada's earliest peoples including the Mi'kmaq, Scots, Irish, Acadians, Black Loyalists and New England Planters. This region is home to vibrant towns as well as smart and savvy cities. Yet, no matter where you may find yourself, you are never far from the wild.





NOVA SCOTIA

Charismatic, cosmopolitan, casual

Halifax is a city teeming with world-class theatre productions, great shops and galleries, unique festivals, and historic sites. But not all attractions are highly publicized, such as the ghost tours at the Halifax Citadel. A guide will take you to little-known places where you'll learn about the famous (and infamous) characters that have formed the warp and woof of the region.

For a walk on the wild side, visit the Timber Lounge on Agricola Street. It's the Maritimes' only adventure lounge featuring axe throwing. Or you could cross the Angus L Macdonald Bridge into Dartmouth and treat yourself to the definitive version of fish & chips at John's Lunch on Pleasant Street. The place is legendary; personalities as diverse as Adrienne Clarkson, Rob Lowe and John Ralston Saul ate there.

Head next to Main Street for a visit at John W. Doull Bookseller, home to the largest collection of marine, nautical and Atlantic Canadian books in the country. Doull's also has rare manuscripts worth thousands of dollars, such as Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*.

Find your way to Rte 207 heading north. Slip into Cole Harbour for a hike and some great bird watching at the Salt Marsh Trail. Back on the 207, you'll pass through Lawrencetown Beach, an international year-round destination for surfers, and Conrad Beach, a vast and secluded oasis.

PHOTOS: BENOIT BRÜHMÜLLER

Another hour's drive will find you in Tangiers, home of the 100 Wild Islands, with more than 250 km of coastal habitats and 400 acres of wetlands, forests, bogs and barrens that have remained isolated for more than 10,000 years. If kayaking is your thing, this is nirvana. You can register for an unforgettable excursion with Coastal Adventures at Mason Point, a world-renowned outfitter.

If your journey takes you to the famous Cabot Trail in Cape Breton, head up the west coast to Gampo Abbey, a Buddhist monastery in Pleasant Bay. Be sure to visit the stupa on site, and read the stations surrounding it. Close by, you can enjoy an exhilarating 7-km hike to Pollet's Cove—a storybook setting that offers a unique combination of isolation and accessibility.

Once you arrive in the cove, you'll discover every topographical feature your heart could desire: a fine sand beach through which a clear mountain river flows; a wildflower-filled hillside pasture on one side and steep forested banks on the other; and, in the middle, blue-grey hills folding into each other as far as the eye can see.

You may also see horses, a collection of curious and friendly creatures that pasture there for the summer. If you happen to be so fortunate, an apple in your pocket would not go amiss.





NEW BRUNSWICK

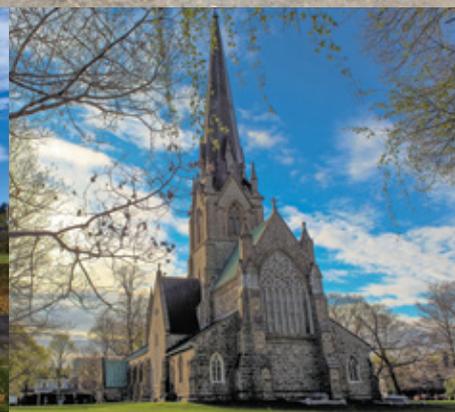
Vast & embracing

With a tagline that says “East of the ordinary,” New Brunswick is all about the extraordinary. For example, the Bay of Fundy features the world’s highest tides. The province is also home to world-famous Ganong Brothers Chocolate and the likes of Stompin’ Tom Connors, Donald Sutherland and David Adams Richards. And that’s only a sliver of its claim to fame.

Along the west coast of the province is the village of Escuminac. This small community of 242 people is also home to Canada’s largest inshore fishery—and the scene of a heart-wrenching disaster when 35 lives were lost at sea during a storm in 1959. The community has more than bounced back; it’s now a thriving and vital place. You can view a video highlighting the disaster in the small historical Myers United Church on the Hardwick Road. Or go beachcombing and make some beach art with Monica McKintyre at the Escuminac Beach and Family Park.

Next, scoot up to the Acadian Peninsula and veer off onto Lamèque Island. Visit St. Cécile Church where every square inch is painted in coloured crosses, circles, stars and candles—it’s bizarre yet brilliant. For lunch, treat yourself at “Au P’tit Mousse” to a seafood pizza—arguably the best on the planet.

You will want to visit Fredericton, the province’s capital city—often referred to as the culture capital of Canada. There



are lots of free and fascinating things to do in the city. You can, for example, visit Christ Church Cathedral, the home of Little Ben, a working scale model of London's famous Big Ben.

Another rewarding (and free!) place to visit is Government House—the official residence for New Brunswick's Lieutenant-Governor. Book a tour guide and you'll learn all sorts of intriguing tidbits that have happened here related to Confederation.

There are also daily ceremonies depicting the changing of the guard, Sunday night movies at the Barracks and theatre performances by the Calithumpians in Officers' Square. These are also free—as are three-day parking passes for visitors, which are available at Town Hall.

At some point, slip up to the Mactaquac Provincial Park—about 20 minutes from Fredericton. Just before the park, a dirt road to the right will take you to The Beaver Ponds. Here, you'll find lots of interesting flora and fauna, explained through interpretive panels. If you're in the mood for a different brand of natural phenomenon, Howland Falls, Garden Creek Falls, and Schneider Falls are within minutes of city limits.

If these excursions have triggered your appetite, be on the lookout for "The Cabin," an old diner and local favourite on the outskirts of Fredericton. There are working jukeboxes at the tables and lots of delicious comfort foods to savour, including old-fashioned turkey dinners and fresh lobster rolls.





PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Small island, big heart

This wee island is the birthplace of Confederation, so a good place to start your journey would be on Queen Street in Charlottetown, where you'll find Sir John A. MacDonald all bronzed up and sitting on a bench. Pull up a seat and give him a nod while you contemplate where to go next!

Then, venture into the Small Print Board Game Café around the corner on Grafton Street. The staff will cheerfully introduce you to over 300 games while you order a savoury snack, charcuterie board, specialty coffee or local beer. Trivia lovers will also find stiff competition at various pubs in town. Trivia nights are a huge cultural thing that's been popular in Charlottetown since the 1990s—and it's a great way to meet the locals.

Now, head "up west" as the locals say. Your goal is to reach Tignish—171 km from Charlottetown—and to spend time on

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these less-travelled but oh-so-interesting shores. Hunker down at the Tignish Heritage Inn and Gardens, a restored convent next to a church built in 1860, which features an 1882 tracker-action pipe organ. Using this inn as home base, you can take day trips to explore side roads in the region.

One such road will lead you to Skinners Pond and a stunning secluded beach that stretches as far as you can see. Should you venture to Sea Cow Bay, you might see part of the Brennan family harvesting moss the old-fashioned way along the beach with their horse, King. Or perhaps you'll end up at the wharves where the fishermen's colourful buoys provide a feast for the eyes.

Eventually, you'll reach the end of the road at North Cape where a visitor's centre showcases fascinating interpretive panels depicting the wind and the efforts to harness its power. Back outside, be sure to slip behind the building and towards the shore to view an astounding collection of inuksuit that people make every year. It's an eye-popper—and you can add to the collection by making your very own! ✦

