

## CEILIDH THE CABOT TRAIL



*Scottish traditions and Gaelic folklore come alive along the Ceilidh Trail. Ceilidh (pronounced kay-lee) is Gaelic for party or gathering, and if you listen closely you might hear the heart-stirring music of bagpipes and fiddles echoing through the glens of this beautiful corner of Cape Breton Island. Celtic music in North America was born here and if the musicians of Cape Breton can't get your toes tapping, you better check your pulse! All this leads to the Cabot Trail, a magnificent highway carved into the edge of ancient highlands where eagles soar above you, seals splash below you and moose wander alongside. From the enchanting Acadian village of Cheticamp, where world-famous hooked rugs are handcrafted, to the greens of the Cabot Links to the 950 square kilometres of Cape Breton Highlands National Park, this is a destination where wonderful is waiting around every bend in the road.*

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### DAY 1

Arrive at the Halifax Stanfield International Airport and transfer to downtown Halifax.

Halifax deftly blends the past with the present to produce a skyline dotted with elegant 18th- and 19th-century architecture alongside ultra-modern towers of glass and steel. The heart of Halifax is perfect for exploring on foot, with tree-lined streets, international restaurants, galleries, libraries and museums. Inviting sidewalk cafés beckon you to while away a few hours amid park-like, waterfront, and historic settings in the busy downtown, often with a backdrop of the bustling harbour, which entertains ship traffic from every corner of the globe. Explore what this “capital city by the sea” has to offer, such as:

- Tour the [Maritime Museum of the Atlantic](#), generally recognized as having the world's finest collection of wooden artifacts from Titanic. Halifax was the closest major port to the 1912 sinking and all of the recovered bodies were brought to Halifax, along with many pieces of wreckage. These fragments, including a near perfectly preserved deckchair and large pieces of oak carving, are featured as part of the museum's permanent exhibit.
- The [Art Gallery of Nova Scotia](#) houses the Province's collection of art unique to Nova Scotia and offers a range of exhibitions and programming, including the Maud Lewis (folkart) collection.
- The [Halifax Waterfront](#) is one of the most visited attractions in the province. With a sparkling water, working port as a backdrop, it's no wonder that the Halifax waterfront is home to a number

of businesses and countless world-class events each year. From walk-a-thons, to Nocturne, the world-renowned Busker Festival to Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo, Halifax is a vibrant event city.

- Visit [Pier 21](#), the Canadian Museum of Immigration. Learn about the experiences of immigrants as they arrived in Canada, the vital role of immigration in the building of Canada and the contributions of immigrants to our country - all at one unique place. The Museum's main exhibition is dedicated to the years when Pier 21 was open as an immigration shed – it's Canada's version of Ellis Island.
- Visit the [Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market](#), especially lively on the weekends, but with storefronts that are open every day of the week. This is the oldest farmers' market in North America which moved into a new location a couple of years ago that now boasts nearly 140 weekend vendors and a green roof with spectacular views of the Harbour.
- At the [Alexander Keith's Nova Scotia Brewery](#), you can take an interactive tour of the brewery, where actors in period costume lead you back in time to learn about the famous beer, the historic brewery and the challenges of life in Halifax in 1863. Then swing by the Stag's Head Tavern for great music, games and of course to sample Alexander Keith's finest ales! Tours are one hour long, beginning the top of every hour.
- Become a soldier for a day at [Halifax Citadel National Historic Site](#), where the sounds of a modern, bustling port city are exchanged for the crack of rifle-fire and the skirl of bagpipes. The present Citadel was completed in 1856 and is the fourth in a series of British forts on this site. Today, the restored Citadel is a national landmark, commemorating Halifax's role as a key naval station in the British Empire and bringing history to life in Atlantic Canada's largest urban centre.
- Take a stroll along [Spring Garden Road](#) for good shopping and good food! This is one of the most popular streets in Halifax and a great spot for people watching! Grab a coffee at The Smiling Goat Organic Espresso Bar or sample the taps at Rockbottom Brew. While you're there tour the Halifax Public Gardens, a rare example of a formal Victorian garden.
- Explore the city's North End. From the ashes of the catastrophic Halifax Explosion, which shattered the City's North End on 6 December 1917, rose the [Hydrostone District](#), a splendid example of an English-style garden suburb. Completed in 1920, this well-preserved neighbourhood was designed according to the most-up-to-date yet practical principles of town planning. This morning, we suggest you visit this unique little part of Halifax's north end where the buildings are all variations on the same architectural theme and all constructed with "Hydro-Stone" concrete blocks and are aesthetically arranged along each side of wide treed courts. The houses and landscape contribute to a remarkable sense of time and place. The neighbourhood is an important achievement by the influential town planner Thomas Adams. The ensuing remerchandising of this shopping area has created a "retail theatre" of unique shops, eateries and services and has become a lively, vibrant place to shop, eat out, and enjoy the Hydrostone.

Overnight: Halifax, NS

## DAY 2

Depart Halifax for Cape Breton Island. When you cross the Canso Causeway, "turn left" to travel along the Ceilidh Trail.

Stop for lunch at the [Celtic Music Interpretive Centre](#) (547 Highway 19, Judique). This unique establishment that has been built to share the culture of Cape Breton with its visitors. Professional musicians are always on hand to talk about the traditional music of Cape Breton and give live demonstrations. Learn to play a tune on the fiddle or a step yourself!

This afternoon, take a tour and taste the whiskey being made at [Glenora Inn & Distillery](#) (13727 Route 19, Glenville). The Gaels are reputed to having invented “Uisge Beatha” ... “The Water of Life” and they claim that Gaelic improves the flavour of the whiskey. In Glenville, on the Ceilidh Trail, you will find lots of the language and the whiskey as its hills are home to North America’s first single malt whiskey distiller, Glenora Distillery.

Travel to the picturesque town of Inverness. With sprawling hills surrounded by a magnificent valley, leading out to the crystal clear waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, visitors to this small Cape Breton coastal village truly enjoy the region’s splendor. A community rich in history and culture, Inverness is a one-of-a-kind place full of hometown pride and is also home to [Cabot Links](#), Canada’s only authentic links course. Hit a few holes or stroll the course to truly appreciate this gem of the golfing world.

Overnight: Inverness, NS

### DAY 3

This morning, you can experience Cabot Links by taking on a few of the course’s holes that are part of Canada’s only true links golf course, where the holes spread out between the sea and the village of Inverness. Or if art is more your thing, take a stroll down the street to the [Inverness County Centre for the Arts](#), which showcases the works of local and international artists in its gallery, music studio and shop. Or savour a leisurely morning stroll along the Inverness Beach searching for seaglass, locally known as ‘mermaid tears’.

This afternoon, travel a bit inland to the famous Margaree River where you can learn the art of fly-fishing and catch your dinner! The Margaree is one of the most beautiful North American rivers and it was appointed as a Heritage River. Since the last century fly fishers have come from all over the world to this area to catch their salmon. At the [Margaree Riverview Inn](#) (21045 Route #19, Margaree Forks), you can get geared up with your hip waders and rods to try your hand at fly fishing! The Margaree holds Atlantic Salmon and Brook Trout. The normal catch in the Margaree river ranges from 6 to 20 pounds with an average catch being 10 pounds. The record catch in the Margaree is 52 lbs!

The Margaree Valley is an amazing place to visit. If time permits, visit the Margaree Salmon Museum (the history of salmon fishing in the area is over 100 years old) or the Margaree Fish Hatchery (the 2nd oldest in North America).

This evening it’s time to dine Maritime style with an authentic lobster dinner at the Lobster Pound Bistro at [Island Sunset Resort](#) (Margaree Harbour, NS). Cape Breton is recognized globally as producing some of the world’s best lobster and at Island Sunset Resort’s private Lobster Pound you can experience lobster like nowhere else! Take a guided tour of a commercial lobster pound, experiencing this unique and magnificent industry first-hand. End the tour with a dinner on their waterfront patio and

enjoy a casual meal of fresh lobster, crab, mussels, salmon, and shrimp prepared fresh for you while you enjoy a cold beverage and watch the waves roll in.

Overnight: Margaree, NS

## DAY 4

Savour a leisurely morning seaside as you make your way towards Pleasant Bay on the Cabot Trail. Suggestions enroute include:

- Visit [Le Centre de la Mi-Carême](#). Mi-Carême, or Mid-Lent, is a celebration involving masks and disguises. The Mi-Carême Centre, that explores this ancient tradition and includes interactive exhibits, opened in May 2009. Short theatre pieces permit glimpses of aspects of this rich cultural celebration. The Centre also offers mask making and rug hooking workshops.
- Cheticamp is a French Acadian fishing community at the entrance to the Cape Breton Highlands National Park. A good stopping stop for an Acadian inspired lunch at Gabriel's.
- If time permits, visit the Elizabeth LeFort Gallery & Museum at [Les Trois Pignons](#) - Dr. Elizabeth LeFort was the first person in the world to hook portraits in wool and is known internationally as "Canada's Artist in wool". Your visit to her gallery in Cheticamp will reveal photographs of her portraits of well known personalities such as John F. Kennedy, Jacquelyn Kennedy and Prince Charles and more. 20 of her actual works are on display, including "The Canadian Centennial" and "The Presidential History". These massive works of art will leave you spell-bound.

Enter the [Cape Breton Highlands National Park](#) and start your journey around the internationally recognized Cabot Trail. Its accolades are endless: Most Scenic Drive; Best Summer Escape; World's Greatest Road Trip. So many superlatives, so little time! Travel this magnificent highway carved into the edge of ancient highlands where eagles soar above, seals splash below and moose wander alongside and you'll understand where all the acclaim comes from.

Make your way to Pleasant Bay for an afternoon ride in search of whales. But don't do the ordinary whale watching cruise ... instead, head out on the 21-foot zodiac-style RIB which provides close-encounters with the whales without disturbing their environment. [Captain Mark's Whale and Seal Cruise](#) (23308 Cabot Trail, Pleasant Bay) offers breathtaking visuals of the whales against the dramatic shoreline of the Cape Breton Highlands National Park that are nothing short of spectacular!

Continue to follow the Cabot Trail in and out of the Cape Breton Highlands National Park and make your way to Ingonish Beach.

Overnight: Ingonish, NS

## DAY 5

This morning, gather your thoughts as you stroll among the magnificent cliffs of Ingonish Beach; or hop on a golf cart to take a tour of one of the most scenic golf courses in Canada, Highland Links; or relax under the soothing hands of a massage therapist at one of the best spas in the province – the choice is yours.

After lunch, conclude your drive through the Cape Breton Highlands National Park and make your way down Cape Smokey towards North River for a Cape Breton kayaking adventure.

[North River Kayak](#) is located a bit off the beaten path but well worth the drive to spend an afternoon kayaking with Angelo, the guitar-playing kayaker! Follow the Cabot trail South for approximately 40 minutes until you cross the Barrachois Bridge, after you cross the bridge you will see a flashing light above the road - take a right on the Cabot Trail and drive for 10 minutes until you come to North River. Take your first left on the Murray Rd. and drive 3.3 km to North River Kayak where you'll spend the afternoon paddling St. Ann's Bay to get a taste of sea kayaking along with a cup of Cape Breton Culture!

Overnight:           Baddeck, NS

## DAY 6

Baddeck is a charming village on the shoreline of the Bras d'Or Lake and known as the summer home of Alexander Graham Bell, who built two homes on his estate he called "Beinn Bhreagh", Scottish Gaelic for "Beautiful Mountain". In addition to being credited as the inventor of the telephone, Bell worked on many other world achievements while in Baddeck, including a hydrofoil that set a long-lasting speed record for watercraft and the first manned flight of an airplane in the British Commonwealth.

Stop by the [Alexander Graham Bell Museum](#) (559 Chebucto St, Baddeck) to take the "white glove" tour of some of Bell's unique creations. This unique exhibit complex is where models, replicas, photo displays, artifacts and films describe the fascinating life and work of Alexander Graham Bell.

After lunch, cross the causeway back onto the mainland and continue to Halifax. This evening, we highly recommend a farewell to Nova Scotia dinner at the [Five Fishermen Restaurant](#) (1740 Argyle Street, Halifax). This historic restaurant has been home to a number of prestigious businesses that have played significant roles in Halifax's history. For many years in the early 1800's, it served as the first school in Canada to offer a free education. It is for this reason that the building has the distinction of being a protected Heritage site. The building then changed hands to a new proprietor, Anna Leonowens. Her purpose was to start up an Art school, thus the Halifax Victorian School of Art was born. Eventually the art school moved to a new location and became the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. It wasn't long after Anna left the building that it was taken over by the Snow family. Snow & Sons would enjoy a bustling business running a mortuary and would play a significant part in the Titanic disaster.

Overnight:           Halifax, NS

## DAY 7

Time to depart Nova Scotia with fond memories ... and a full belly!