

NOVA SCOTIA

Grand Nova Scotia Driving Tour



You can embrace the spirit of the perfect road trip here. A car is optional, because you can also bike, hike, sail or paddle your way to spontaneous discovery. Throw away your map, and find as much freedom in the stops in-between as in the places you planned to go. Located in eastern Canada and almost completely surrounded by ocean, Nova Scotia is a place where you can feel your pace fall in sync with the rhythm of the sea, as the clean salt air breathes life into an afternoon. Immerse yourself in culture that ranges from traditional to avant-garde, from bagpipes to world-class golf.

Day 1 (Halifax)

Welcome to Nova Scotia!

Nova Scotia's capital city, 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, world class restaurants, pubs, galleries, libraries, museums and more. 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. Suggestions for touring the city include:

- 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.
- 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.
- **Segway Nova Scotia** is a new and unique way to explore the Halifax waterfront! Tours & the waterfront spin include training, a chance to stop for pictures, and time to enjoy the sites.

- Rent a bicycle and take a Halifax City Tour with **I HEART Bikes**. This tour is designed to showcase the best of Halifax in 2 hours. A Halifax expert will take you around the city showcasing a variety of different neighbourhoods while highlighting our unique history and all the reasons why we Haligonians love the city today.
- 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.
- Take an immersive tour of the **Alexander Keith's Nova Scotia Brewery** as 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.
- 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.
- Don't miss 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 vendors and a green roof with spectacular views of the Harbour.
- 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 wonders of Nova Scotia at the **Museum of Natural History**. See glittering gold, stunning Mi'kmaq artifacts, sea creatures, frogs, snakes and a whale skeleton. Interact with the Netukulimk exhibit and learn the sights and sounds of Nova Scotia's forests. In the Nature Lab, Museum Naturalists will introduce you to our live animals and show how they are cared for. The museum's public programs include displays, walks and talks throughout the year to explore and experience first-hand the wonders of Nova Scotia's nature. (1747 Summer Street)
- See Halifax from a motorcycle sidecar! **Bluenose Sidecar Tours**, based in the Halifax area, offers a soft-adventure sightseeing experience that you won't find anywhere else in Eastern Canada! Two URAL sidecar rigs, driven by experienced guides, allow groups of up to four individuals take in the sights and history of our provincial capital, visit the scenic fishing village of Peggy's Cove, enjoy a full-day tour of the South Shore and Lunenburg, or customize your own authentic Nova Scotian experience.

Overnight: Halifax

Day 2 (Halifax to Lunenburg)

Your first stop today is **Peggy's Cove** on the **South Shore**, one of the most photographed places in

Canada. The graceful lighthouse sitting high upon the smooth wave-worn granite of the coast now does duty as a Canada's only post office in a lighthouse.

The South Shore (also known as the Lighthouse Route) journeys through a landscape of coastal beauty and historic charm. Follow shoreline roads past rugged wave-carved headlands and tranquil island-studded bays where legends of the sea come alive in historic towns and weathered fishing villages. Three members of the ECONOMUSEUM® network are located on the Lighthouse Route - **Artifacts in Clay** in Chester and **Amos Pewter** and **Spruce Top Rug Hooking Studio** in Mahone Bay.

In **Mahone Bay**, the narrow streets are lined with a unique collection of studios and galleries of some of Canada's finest artists and craftspeople. The town has been a treasure since 1745 and named one of Canada's best small-town downtowns. The town's famous "three churches" stand side by side at the waterfront creating one of the region's most famous views. Described by the New York Times as "pretty as a picture", the town bustles with activity during its popular festivals, such as the Great Scarecrow Festival, the Classic Boat Festival and the Father Christmas Festival.

Visit the seafaring town of **Lunenburg**, where the colourful waterfront, narrow streets and captivating architecture radiate the flavor of the town's rum running and ship building heritage. Founded in 1753 by German and Swiss immigrants, the former mansions of this town display unique architectural features varying from Gothic towers to elegant verandas. Old Town Lunenburg is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site (one of three in the province!) and is home to Nova Scotia's famous racing schooner, Bluenose II (which is also featured on the Canadian ten-cent piece). Stop by for a tasting at **Ironworks Distillery**, a boutique distillery housed in an old ironworks building which now makes vodka from apples grown in the Annapolis Valley! Get up-close-and-personal with the seafood and seafaring history in Lunenburg with a visit to the **Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic**, housed in an old fish processing plant. Included with the museum pass is access to the working wharf, where you can explore retired fishing schooners, chat with their captains, feel the creatures of the sea in the touch tank and even learn how to shuck a scallop! Take a tour of Lunenburg and learn about its unique history and how it became a UNESCO Heritage Site. Tours available on foot with **Lunenburg Walking Tours** or by horse & buggy with **Trot in Time Tours**.

Take a short side-trip about a six minute drive from the Town of Lunenburg to the village of **Blue Rocks**. This little community is known locally as "Lunenburg's answer to Peggy's Cove". Still a working fishing village with blue slate rocks on the edge of the ocean, it's a dream location as an artisan or photographer's muse. The fish shack sitting in the water is the one of the most photographed buildings in the county.

Overnight: Lunenburg

Day 3 (Lunenburg - Yarmouth)

The town of **Liverpool** has long been known as the "Port of the Privateers" in recognition of when prohibition in the United States allowed Liverpool to become a rum running centre in the 1920's. Today, in addition to the traditional industries, Liverpool is renowned for its cultural and natural landscape and is the home to several international festivals, artisan galleries and cultural centres. Take a stroll along the waterfront or visit Fort Point Lighthouse.

Travel to the Loyalist Town of **Shelburne**. This small fishing community, nestled on the third finest natural harbour in the world, was once the fourth largest community in North America when, during the American Revolution in 1783, about 3000 United Empire Loyalists arrived in ships from New York

City and the population quickly grew to more than 10,000. Visit Shelburne's Waterfront Heritage District, which retains an aura of the 18th century, or drive a few minutes outside the town limits to **Birchtown**, the first free black settlement in Canada with the arrival of the United Empire Loyalists. Visit the Black Loyalist Heritage - for those who have descendants who escaped slavery in the 1780s and made their way to Nova Scotia, this is one of the best places to do your genealogical digging.

The southwestern most tip of Nova Scotia is renowned for its Acadian roots, colourful fishing villages, towering churches and the spectacular lighthouses. These Acadian Shores have a history dating back over 400 years and contain French-speaking villages like **Pubnico**, the world's oldest Acadian community. Be sure to try out local culinary specialties, like creamed lobster and rappie pie.

The community of Ste. Anne du Ruisseau is home to **Eel Lake Oyster Farm** and the "Ruisseau" oyster. Awaken your senses and taste the difference a Ruisseau oyster makes. This succulent oyster can be found nestled in the clean, cool waters of Eel Lake and is the pride of Eel Lake Oyster Farm. Take a boat ride tour out to see the habitat of the oysters, their stages of growth and how its grown out. Then sample the product and share a yarn with the "Oysterman," who loves to tell a tale or two about his labour of love.

The town of **Yarmouth** is the regional centre of South Western Nova Scotia. The port is located in the heart of the world's largest lobster fishing grounds. With Canada's most lucrative fishing industry, Yarmouth and the Acadian Shores area have a culture and economy historically tied to fishing and related industries. The distinctive architecture within Yarmouth, old and new, and the parks and trails show the pride of the community. Attractions such as the **Laurence Sweeney Fisheries Museum** and the **Firefighter's Museum of Nova Scotia** delve into the rich history of the area. Take a drive out to **Cape Forchu Lightstation** and stretch your legs with a walk around The Leif Ericsson Park, a new development of walking paths, picnic sites, and benches with views, located at the southern tip of the site, surrounded by water and offering great photo opportunities. Along the way, find "hidden treasures" though select geo caches on site.

Overnight: Yarmouth

Day 4 (Yarmouth - Wolfville)

The Evangeline Trail parallels the Fundy coast, passing through some of North America's earliest European history and the delightful villages and orchards of the **Annapolis Valley**. It's a journey that spans 400 years of settlement, a journey that will take you past forts, farms and fishing villages, a journey rich in culture, diversity, charm and natural beauty.

Drive along the Digby Neck to **Brier Island** for a whale watching adventure on the Bay of Fundy. The waters at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy are important feeding areas for many species of cetaceans, seals and a wide variety of seabirds.

Continue to **Annapolis Royal**. This scenic town overlooking the Annapolis River was founded in 1605, making it the oldest settlement of European origin in Canada. Annapolis Royal contains over 150 heritage buildings including the oldest wooden house in Canada. Take time to visit **Fort Anne National Historic Site**, and see the impressive Heritage Tapestry which depicts 400 years of the area's history and the **Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens** with theme gardens and displays reflecting the history of the area. Across the harbour is the reconstructed **Port Royal National Historic Site**.

Take Route 8 cross-country to **Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site**, a 381 km² of scenic inland wilderness country which abounds with wildlife and offers visitors the opportunity to hike one of the 14 trails through woodlands and along waterways or to canoe one of the waterways used by the native Mi'kmaq.

Your final destination today is **Wolfville**, a charming university town with stately trees and beautiful heritage homes.

Overnight: Wolfville area

Day 5 (Wolfville - Amherst)

Visit the charming little village of **Hall's Harbour**, home to the "Lobster in the Rough" dining experience. During the warm weather, locals and visitors alike flock to this tiny fishing village to select and have prepared in the on-site cook shack, a sample of the world renowned Bay of Fundy lobster. The experience is heightened by devouring this delicacy while seated in the waterfront dining room, the prime stage for observing the highest tides in the world. At low tide the wharf is high and dry and the fishing boats wait patiently on the harbour bottom until the tide rises as much as an inch a minute to the 40 foot high tide mark on the wharf. Truly a phenomenon to witness!

Nova Scotia's agricultural region is quickly becoming known as "wine country". There are currently 25+ grape growers nurturing over 400 acres of vines producing award-winning wines. The earliest vines in Nova Scotia were planted in 1611 by Champlain's hardy band of settlers. Today our internationally successful varieties are: Marechal Foch, DeChaunac, Baco Noir, Leon Millot, Seyval Blanc and L'Acadie Blanc. Wineries in this area to tour and taste include **Domaine de Grand Pre, Blomidon Estate Winery, Gaspereau Vineyard, L'Acadie Vineyards, Lockett Vineyards, Saint Famille Wines, Planter's Ridge and Avondale Sky Winery.**

Grand Pre National Historic Site is one of three UNESCO Heritage Sites in Nova Scotia. The site and interpretive centre commemorates Grand-Pré area as a centre of Acadian settlement from 1682 to 1755 and the Deportation of the Acadians, which began in 1755 and continued until 1762.

Twice each day the Bay of Fundy fills and empties its 160 billion tons of water creating the highest tides in the world. In 1975 The Guinness Book of World Records listed Burntcoat Head in the Minas Basin, Nova Scotia as the site of the greatest average tide of 47.5 feet with an extreme range of 53.6 feet. Visitors can see this daily phenomena at the **Burntcoat Head Park**. For the most dramatic effect of the tide, visit both at low and high tide. The six hours between tides can be spent enjoying the Park or exploring the local community. From the Historic Village of Maitland, to the Walton Lighthouse and the sweeping vistas around the Cheverie community, Highway 215 is rich in natural beauty and things to do.

As you continue today, be sure and check the tide schedule as you might have the opportunity to ride the world famous tidal bore at one of the many **tidal bore** rafting companies that operate along the **Shubenacadie River**. Encounter the power of the advancing tide overtaking the natural flow of the river. Watch in awe as a small stream reverses into a turbulent river and the wet and wild adventure begins. For those who would rather watch than ride, a look-off and interpretation centre are located in **South Maitland** which gives viewers an outstanding view of the rafters battling the currents.

Overnight: Truro

Day 6 (Truro to Amherst)

Truro's colourful painted murals throughout the town depicts its history and tree sculptures highlight important figures from the past. Also located in Truro at the Truro Power Centre is the **Glooscap Heritage Centre**, showcasing and interpreting Mi'kmaq culture of the region, including an Aboriginal gallery, multimedia presentation, audio exhibit and visitor information centre.

Stop in **Economy**, a great place to "walk on the bottom of the sea" where clam digging, rockhounding and bass fishing are popular activities. At **Five Islands** visit the provincial park with campgrounds, a picnic park, a beach and hiking trails featuring look-offs that offer splendid views of the islands and shore.

Parrsboro is the largest community in this area and is the headquarters for rockhounds who come to the Minas Basin looking for zeolites and semi-precious stones such as agate and amethyst, which are found on the beaches and in the cliffs. A great place to learn about the minerals, fossils and fascinating geology of the region is at the **Fundy Geological Museum**.

Visit **Cape Chignecto**, site of Nova Scotia's largest provincial park with a hiking trail which circumnavigates the cape along rugged cliffs rising high above the Bay of Fundy. Take a guided tour at **Joggins Fossil Cliffs UNESCO World Heritage Site** where 300-million-year-old fossils are continually revealed by the world's highest tides. The Centre contains an extensive collection and interactive displays.

Overnight: Amherst

Day 7 (Amherst to Inverness)

Travel along the **Northumberland Shore** which begins in **Amherst**, a full-service town with parks, museums, and an 18-hole golf course. The Northumberland Shore follows 450 km (280 mi.) of shoreline along the **Northumberland Strait** with over thirty fine-sand beaches which offer an irresistible invitation. If you love to eat, blueberries, fine wines and delicious seafood are plentiful.

Stop in the historic harbour town of **Pictou**, one of the largest communities on the Northumberland Shore. Pictou is home of the **Hector Heritage Quay**. The quay's colourful displays and costumed guides bring to life the history of the Scottish immigrants who arrived on the ship *Hector* in 1773.

Your journey continues to **Cape Breton Island**, Nova Scotia's Masterpiece where historic villages and fashionable resorts combine to create a rhythm that is uniquely Cape Breton. 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! The **Celtic Music Interpretive Centre** in Judique was 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. In Glenville you will find lots of the Gaelic 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** and **Cabot Cliffs**, two of Canada's newest and top rated golf courses. 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 stroll along the Inverness Beach searching for seaglass, locally known as 'mermaid tears'.

Overnight: Inverness

Day 8 (Inverness to Sydney)

Explore the world famous **Cabot Trail** - a coastal highway described as one of the most spectacular drives in North America. The Cabot Trail winds around the rocky splendour of Cape Breton's northern shore, ascending to the incredible plateaus of Cape Breton Highlands National Park. This magnificent highway is carved into the sides of mountains that rise high above the shimmering waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Look-offs offer unforgettable vistas of Cape Breton's rugged coastline, where pods of whales can often be seen just offshore and bald eagles soar aloft on the ocean breezes.

Baddeck, on the shores of the sparkling Bras d'Or Lakes, was the summer home of Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone. You can discover his many contributions to science at the **Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site**.

End your day in **Sydney**, Nova Scotia's second-largest city, which provides an extensive array of services and amenities for visitors. A focal point of the city is an extensive boardwalk with colonial lighting which winds along 3 km of harbourfront and in the summer months, is a popular centre of activities and entertainment

Overnight: Sydney area

Day 9 (Sydney to Louisbourg)

Stop in **Glace Bay** where you can experience life in a coal mine first-hand at the **Miner's Museum**, one of the region's most popular attractions or visit the **Marconi National Historic Site** which marks the place from which Guglielmo Marconi and his team of engineers and scientists sent the first wireless transatlantic signal in 1902.

Travel to Louisbourg where you can easily spend half a day at **Fortress Louisbourg National Historic Site**, the largest historical reconstruction in North America. Mingle with soldiers, fishermen, merchants, servants, ladies and gentlemen going about their daily business in this unique 1700s settlement and enjoy a homemade period meal authentically prepared and served in one of the historical restaurants.

Overnight: Louisbourg

Day 10 (Louisbourg to Liscomb)

Travel along the shores of Cape Breton Island's beautiful inland sea - the Bras d'Or Lake. The **Bras d'Or Lake** is the traditional home of Nova Scotia's native Mi'kmaq and the Mi'kmaq language and culture are still evident today in the four reserves along its shores: Waycobah, Eskasoni, Wagmatcook and Chapel Island in St. Peter's Inlet.

Stop in **St. Peter's**, known as the "Gateway to the Bras d'Or Lake" which is a full-service community situated on a narrow strip of land separating the Atlantic Ocean and the Bras d'Or Lake. The **St. Peter's Canal**, a National Historic Site, connects these two great bodies of water.

At the Canso Causeway, travel back to the mainland of Nova Scotia to **Antigonish** and then inland to **Sherbrooke**. Spend the afternoon at **Sherbrooke Village Museum**, the former picturesque lumbering and shipbuilding community which looks as it did 100 years ago, before gold mining transformed it into a boom town.

Your destination today is **Liscomb Mills** on the **Marine Drive**, a fisherman and canoeist's paradise. The **Liscomb River Trail** follows the river's edge to a swinging bridge spanning a 20-metre waterfall and returns along the other side.

Overnight: Liscomb

Day 11 (Liscomb to Halifax)

Your drive today continues along the Eastern Shore. Stop at the **Memory Lane Heritage Village** in Lake Charlotte, which offers a nostalgic look at life in the 1940's, and at the **Fisherman's Life Museum** in Jeddore, where guides in period costume recreate the simple yet powerful daily life of coastal fishing communities.

The dependable breezes and steady surf at **Lawrencetown Beach Provincial Park** make it a favourite playground for surfers and windsurfers and it's a great place to take a walk on one of the province's most popular sand beaches.

End your day at **Fisherman's Cove** in Eastern Passage, a restored fishing village which is located at the mouth of Halifax Harbour and offers an inviting collection of craft shops and restaurants and an extensive seaside boardwalk.

Overnight: Halifax

Day 12 (Halifax)

Spend your last few hours exploring a bit more of Halifax before you depart with fond memories of your time in Nova Scotia!