

Ramble On

Because the Road Goes on Forever

www.rambleon.rocks



Acadia National Park



Acadia is one of my favorite National Parks. It has some of the best hiking trails in the entire country, having been lovingly constructed by huge crews of CCC lads during the Depression as part of Roosevelt's New Deal. Scarcely a single step of the hundred or so miles of trail escaped the notice of the trail masters and there will be a carefully laid stone to help you ascend or descend. Unlike other parts of the Northeast that can sometimes test a hiker's patience for views, you will rarely hike very far in Acadia without having your breath taken away.

In addition to the footpaths, there are gorgeous carriage paths throughout the park dating from when it was a Rockefeller Estate but vastly improved by the CCC. Make sure you appreciate the extraordinary craft of the roads and stone bridges built by the "CC Boys" throughout the park. They don't make 'em like this anymore folks.

You can bicycle, walk, run on these car-free roads over mountains and past pristine ponds. Or if you prefer, hire a carriage and pretend you are a Rockefeller.

Bar Harbor, ME is a few miles outside of the park boundary is as spectacular a Maine seacoast town as you will ever see. And of course, they are happy to sell you t-shirts, taffy and lobsters too.

Tom's Top Thrills in Acadia National Park

Driving:

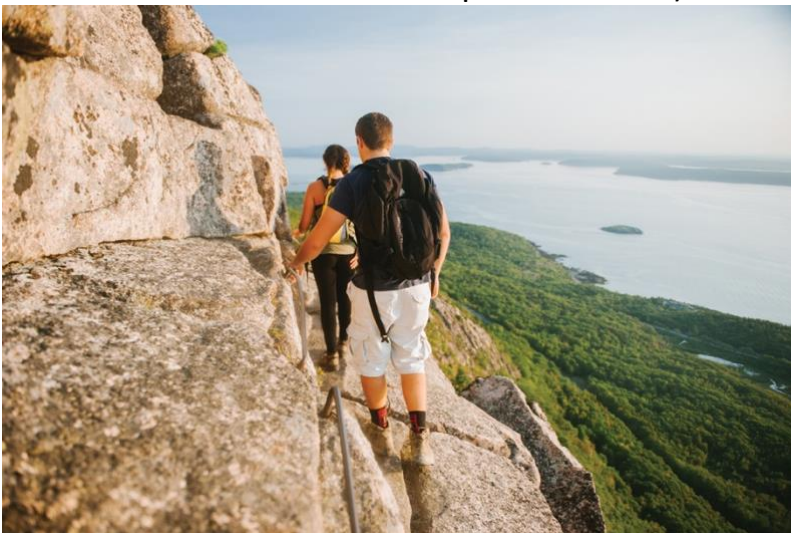
- Drive loop drive. Do it on the early side of the day if high summer, unless you want to be in the conga line and have trouble finding parking at the many pull outs.



- Check out Seal Harbor. Tiny little town and just a nice contrast to the more hectic Bar Harbor.
- Skip Cadillac Mountain (see below).

Hiking: Acadia is some of my favorite hiking in all of North America, due to the great views, natural beauty, and the incredible works of art the trails themselves are.

- **The Precipice to Sand Beach:** Begin at the Precipice trailhead on the loop road. (If possible, do a shuttle so you can leave your vehicle at Sand Beach. The trick is that the road goes one way here, so if you're trying to drop a car it means going all the way around to get back to the Precipice Trailhead. There is no super easy way to do this without a willing driver to help you. If it's just you, you can park at Sand Beach and then shuttle all the way around and back to the Precipice Trailhead).



Hike the Precipice to the top of Champlain Mountain.

Important – The Precipice, as the name implies, is not for anyone who has a fear of heights. It's not quite rock climbing, but there are many extremely exposed

sections as you are basically climbing straight up a vertical cliff. There are iron rungs for the most difficult sections. It's a thrill but only if you like that kind of thing. If you don't, or have any type of fear of exposed heights, take the alternate trail to the North (it branches off from the precipice trail a short way up) that will lead you around the cliff and then up to the same spot on the top of Champlain Mountain where you can meet up with other members of the party that tackled the Precipice. From the top of Champlain, take the trail to the south that gently works you down toward The Bowl and the Bee Hive (also a fun and vertiginous little trail). Eventually make your way to Sand Beach for a well-deserved swim.

- **Jordon Pond & The Bubbles:** Jordon Pond is a *must* breakfast spot for coffee, popovers and jam. The line can be long but they have a large capacity. Get there just as they open, and you will be seated quickly typically. While there, walking around the pond itself is a pleasant flat hike. Penobscot mountain can be tacked on to a hike around the western side for those seeking more elevation and views. The Bubbles (north and south) are close by and big reward for low effort/miles hikes.



- **Blackwoods Campground to Bar Harbor:** This is fun to do if you are staying in Blackwoods. You can walk right out your door and scale 7 peaks, including Cadillac Mountain, over 7 miles all the way to Bar Harbor. If you have friends in camp who are willing to drive to town and meet you, ideally with beers at the ready, you won't have to walk or shuttle back.
- **Doer Mountain:** A nice little hike up hundreds of beautifully crafted CCC stone steps to a big view.

Riding: There are miles of carriage roads around the island when it was their estate that are now open to walking, biking and horseback riding. If you're

walking, I would always recommend a hiking trail instead for the relative views and beauty. But the roads are great for gentler walks, biking, or carriage rides, which can be booked online at recreation.gov. The stables are near Day Mountain.

Cadillac Mountain: This is where 90% of the tourists will go because it's the most famous point in the park and because it's the first place in the U.S. to see the sunrise. Every morning, hundreds gather to do just that. The rest of the day it's a very busy spot. So much so, that the NPS has instituted reservations. My advice is to skip the drive up Cadillac altogether and just do comparably beautiful hikes other places in the park (or hike up Cadillac itself from many different trails if you wish).

In Bar Harbor:



- There are lots of great restaurants in town and fun bars. Don't immediately just go for the ones on the water or on Main St. as there are some great places hidden among the side streets too. I like the Cottage St. Pub.
- Walk the Shore Path (starts right at the end of Main St. near Agamont Park and runs along the shore going East then South). Stop at the Bar Harbor Inn & Spa for a Blueberry beer on the way back to slake your thirst.

Other Islands & Parts of the Park:

- Mount Desert Island is the star of this show. But if you have the time, there are several other parts of the park worth exploring and that are very quiet in comparison (Mount Desert can be a little nuts at times).

Sleeping:

- Campgrounds and Hotels abound. Just pick whatever type of accommodation you are inclined toward. But plan ahead in summer.
- I like to stay right in the park at Blackwoods just because it's close to everything and still an easy drive (or amazing hike) to Bar Harbor. Like all NPS campgrounds, there are no RV hookups or showers in the campground. But, just a 2 minute drive from the campground is a private shower/bathhouse facility that will get you cleaned up for a few sheckles. So, it works fine even for longer stays.