10 Things to Do in Bar Harbor, Maine

Bar Harbor, Maine, is a little town located on the coast of Mount Desert Island. Only a few thousand people live there year-round. Yet, millions flock to the area every year — with good reason. The scenic coastal town is home to souvenir shops, local food, lighthouses and wildlife. Plus, it offers hiking trails, a national park, ocean excursions and many other activities. Here are a few things you simply must do if you visit in Bar Harbor.

1. Visit Acadia

Maine's Acadia National Park is one of the top 10 most-visited national parks in the U.S. Each year, 3.5 million people travel to this gem to enjoy 158 miles of hiking trails and 27 miles of historic motor roads. Climb Cadillac Mountain, visit Thunder Hole, hike out to one of the many ponds or lounge on the beach at Echo Lake. Whatever you choose to do, you'll surely enjoy the rocky cliffs, wooded paths and gorgeous coastal views.

2. Hike the Bar

Bar Harbor's neighboring island is also part of Acadia. While you could take a boat over, the best way to experience Bar Island is to hike the gravel bar that appears during low tide. Before going, be sure to check local times for high and low tide so you don't get stranded. Otherwise, you will have to wait another 12 hours to cross back over to Mount Desert Island.

3. Walk the Shore Path

While you're in the hiking mood, you might as well traverse Bar Harbor's Shore Path, too. This walking trail is more than 100 years old and is about a mile and a half long, offering stunning scenic views. As you make your way from Ells Pier to Wayman Lane, you'll be able to see Egg Rock Light, the Porcupine Islands and the Schoodic Peninsula.

4. Visit the Abbe Museum

The Abbe Museum is Maine's first and only Smithsonian affiliate and highlights the history and culture of the Wabanaki natives. Changing exhibitions, special events and workshops ensure guests learn something new no matter how many times they visit. Plus, the museum works closely

with the Wabanaki people to relay accurate information and contemporary objects. It also has the largest collection of Maine Native American basketry in the world.

5. Relax at the Atlantic Brewing Company

The Atlantic Brewing Company, previously called Acadia Brewing, has been serving up local brews since 1991. Their Bar Harbor Real Ale was their original beer and remains their most popular. They also have a delicious Blueberry Ale that has those famous wild Maine blueberries complementing the hops. You can relax in their tasting room, take a tour of the brewery, or grab some to go.

6. Go Glamping at Terramor

Find peace of mind in the great outdoors by spending a few nights in the woods. The island's Terramor Outdoor Resort offers a luxurious getaway among the trees of Mount Desert Island. Plus, glamping tents are at least 50 feet away from one another, giving you privacy and a relaxing space to call your own. Some even come with private bathrooms, Wi-Fi and overhead fans for maximum comfort. Take advantage of the pool and other recreation areas while you're there, too.

7. Taste Some Local Fare

If you're going to Maine, you simply must eat some lobster. Since fishermen catch the creatures right off the coast, whatever you order will likely be fresh. Plus, since it doesn't have to travel very far to reach your plate, Maine lobster is significantly cheaper than buying and eating it at home. You might also try some blueberry-flavored beer, coffee, chocolate and other products, as the state proudly boasts 44,000 acres of blueberry fields.

8. Kayak or Canoe the Harbor

Looking for some adventure? Get off-shore and take a kayak or canoe tour of the harbor. A handful of adventure shops and nature centers offer tours and supply all the gear you'll need. Spot wildlife like otters, seals, sea birds and even whales while exploring the coastlines and breathing in the ocean air. Your guide might point out a few lighthouses or private islands as you paddle.

9. Take a Boat Tour

If you'd rather let someone else steer the boat and do all the work, take a lighthouse boat tour. As you sail through the harbor, the captain will point out some of Maine's most historic and picturesque lighthouses. They may even fill you in on some facts about lobster buoys, local wildlife and which celebrities live on which islands. You might also opt for a seal or whale watching tour if lighthouses aren't your thing.

10. Explore Tidal Pools

Learn more about Maine's many lighthouses by getting up close and personal with a few. Most are accessible by car and open to the public during the summer months. Plus, visiting lighthouses will allow you to explore the rocky coastline and all the tide pools left by the waves and tides. If you have kids, they'll especially love wading through these shallow pools looking for crabs, starfish, urchins and other ocean organisms.

Maine, the Way Life Should Be

After visiting Bar Harbor, you may find Maine's state slogan, "the way life should be," perfectly encapsulates your sentiments toward the beautiful coastline and scenic trails. Before you know it, you'll be admiring your photos and planning your next trip back to the charming little town to enjoy all it has to offer.

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