

Nova Scotia/Newfoundland Itinerary

June 17-30, 2025

\$5,300 double occupancy, \$5,900 single supplement

June 17

You arrive tonight (or very early the next morning) for a stay at Inn on the Lake on the outskirts of Halifax.

June 18

You depart this morning and hug the eastern coast of Nova Scotia as you head toward the Village of Sherbrooke. You'll enjoy a stop at beautiful Taylor Head Provincial Park. It's often quite windy here, but we rarely have to share the beach with others. This park hints at the incredible sights you'll enjoy on your journey. A short loop walk lets us pick up our first warblers of the trip. Common Eider and gray seal often frequent the bay at Taylor's Head. It is the park where I first fell in love with Nova Scotia.

After departing Taylor Head, you'll drive past the historic town of Sherbrooke on our way to my folk's house on Waternish Road, with a stunning view of the St. Mary's River. I'll fix tonight's dinner, allowing us to wander the gorgeous trails on the banks of the St. Mary's River...and enable you to discover what black flies are. Overnight Waternish Rod and Gun Club

June 19:

For those wanting to bird, I'll lead a bird walk at 5:15 a.m. Waternish Road is a favorite of warbler lovers, as more than 20 species occur here. You'll see Northern Parula near the house and have excellent chances at Northern Waterthrush, American Redstart, Black-and-white Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Magnolia, and Chestnut-sided Warblers and a decent chance at Canada, Blackburnian, Black-throated Blue Warblers, and many more.

After breakfast, you'll head to Sherbrooke and give you a chance to wander among the historic village, designed to provide you with a glimpse of life before 1900. The sawmill in Sherbrooke (built-in 1826) is still active and cuts truly dimensional lumber with a 6-foot-diameter blade. If it's still in operation, you'll enjoy lunch at Beanie's Bistro.

After lunch, you'll head to Port Bickerton Lighthouse for fantastic scenery, shorebirds, and a search for Blackpoll Warbler and Boreal Chickadee. The area is so scenic that any birds we see are a bonus. Finally, you'll head back to Sherbrooke and continue to Liscombe Mills, enjoying dinner at Liscombe Riverside Restaurant. Birds that frequent feeders here include Evening Grosbeak, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Blue Jay, Red Crossbill, and many more. Overnight Waternish Rod and Gun Club

June 20

I'll be ready for another early morning of birding on Waternish Road. After breakfast, you'll head to Antigonish Landing, where you're almost sure to spot Nelson's Sparrow. An occasional rarity like Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Tufted Duck occasionally appear in the bay here. After that, it's up to the group, but we can swing by the Highland Games for a bit or move toward Cape Breton.

You'll stop at Pomquet Beach to search for the endangered Piping Plover. On our last trip to this beach, one of the participants spotted a mountain lion!

You'll arrive in Cape Breton in time for lunch at the Celtic Interpretive Center, where locals will sing Celtic and Gaelic songs while we eat. Then, about 1.5 hours later, you'll arrive at Cornerstone Motel, our lodge, for the next two nights. With some luck, you'll spot moose wading in the Cheticamp River just behind our rooms. I chose this lodge because it borders Cape Breton Highlands, National Park.

Dinner tonight offers excellent seafood; if scallops are on your wish list, this is THE place to enjoy a scallop dinner. Overnight Cornerstone Motel

June 21

Today, you'll spend the entire day in Cape Breton Highlands National Park. There are numerous incredible vistas and several beautiful walks. One boardwalk takes us deep into a bog and gives us a chance at Bicknell's Thrush. Pitcher plants and sundew (a flytrap plant) occur here. Benji's Lake Trail is a lovely, leisurely walk back to an alpine lake. We have an excellent chance of spotting a moose or two on the hike, and some unusual birds also frequent the trail, like Black-backed Woodpecker, White-winged Crossbill, and Mourning Warbler. With extraordinary luck, we could even spot a lynx.

June 22

You'll depart Cheticamp tonight to make your way toward the ferry in North Sydney, but not before loading up on pastries from the delightful boulangerie in Cheticamp. You'll visit Big Glace Bay Bird Sanctuary, which can yield a variety of scoters, shorebirds, gulls, and Black Guillemots.

Lunch will be at an Irish pub in North Sydney, Nova Scotia, with a beautiful outdoor deck, weather permitting. Then, you'll board the ferry for a 5:00 p.m. departure. Usually, the birding is not very good upon ferry departure, but we might pick up our first Sooty Shearwaters and Arctic Terns. Dinner is a buffet, which is surprisingly good quality. This boat is relatively modern, including a bar, where you might see me enjoying a single malt Scotch. I'll happily buy you a drink of your choice!

June 23:

Very early this morning (5:00 a.m.) I'll be on the leeward side of the ferry, scouring the ocean for birds. We've seen dozens of Great and Sooty Shearwaters on past ferry trips. Leach's Storm Petrel is also likely, and we have a great chance at Manx Shearwater and perhaps a species or two of Jaeger.

After breakfast, you'll land in Newfoundland around 10:00 a.m. (with a half-hour time change). We'll make our way to Bonavista, stopping along the way at a roadside café for lunch. The scenery is beautiful on this 2.5-hour drive, and you can often stop for a scenic photo. We'll arrive in Bonavista in the early afternoon and walk out to the Bonavista Peninsula, one of the few places you can photograph Atlantic Puffins without the assistance of a boat.

About 45 minutes after departing Bonavista, you'll arrive in the charming town of Trinity. A few excellent quaint restaurants here will allow you to experience local foods.

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June 24

You'll have breakfast at 8 this morning. You'll also be able to drive back to Bonavista just before sunrise. In the early morning hours, puffins often allow you to get remarkably close, providing amazing photographic opportunities. You'll meet the others for breakfast. The reason for venturing this far northeast is the chance to see a Stellar's Sea Eagle, which has been here for over three years. Our boat trip is also an excellent chance for spotting several whale species and a host of sea birds. The afternoon is open, and you'll visit some of the coastline, which you'll likely share with your group and nobody else.

June 25

It's about a three-hour drive from Trinity to St. Brides. Although moose were introduced to Newfoundland in 1904, over 150,000 of these huge mammals have been raised. You'll search the taiga looking for a great moose photo. There is also a large resident caribou here that you might spot on your drive/

We'll stop for lunch at Bird's Eye Café before making our way to Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve, a must-visit on any nature enthusiast's bucket list. You'll stand within 50 yards of over

ten thousand Northern Gannets, nesting safely on a rock protected by a 500-foot drop-off. Other targets include Razorbill, Thick-billed and Common Murre, and Black-legged Kittiwake. Sometimes we spot whales far below us! This truly is a remarkable spot.

After lunch, you'll bird a few turnouts, looking for Pine Grosbeak, Northern Waterthrush, Canada Jay, Fox and Swamp Sparrow, and more. Finally, you'll return to Bird's Eye for dinner, as there is no other option within an hour's drive. The owner's husband catches the seafood on the menu, and you will never get fresher fish than is served here. If you love fish n chips, they're delicious here.

June 26

I hope to convince Maude, the owner of Bird's Eye, to cook us breakfast. If not, you'll have to make do with what we can purchase at the convenience store and prepare for ourselves. We may return to Cape St. Mary's or drive to Point Lance, where we may spot caribou on the drive and humpback whales feeding in the bay. You'll likely have this dead-end road to us. We spotted a half-dozen Pine Grosbeak here three years ago while enjoying a harbour seal spying on us from the glass-smooth seas.

June 27

You'll go to Trepassey this morning, stopping for some birding and perhaps an iceberg sighting or two.

You'll enjoy a brown bag lunch while gawking at whales at St. Vincent's Beach. Dozens of humpback whales feed in the waters on capelin here. If it's not foggy, you'll see numerous breaching whales. We may be close enough to smell their blows.

Today, our afternoon targets are Mistaken Point, so named for the numerous shipwrecks that occur here, and Cape Race Lighthouse, the first to receive the distress calls of The Titanic. You all have a suite to enjoy at Edge of Avalon Inn. The food here used to border on inedible, but they now serve excellent fare. I'll buy pan-sauteed cod tongue, which is considered a delicacy. You have to decide for yourself.

June 28

This morning, we may hike to discover 500 thousand-year-old fossils preserved in exquisite detail. It also is an extraordinarily scenic spot. You'll also take a few side roads in a quest to find woodland caribou. After lunch, you'll head to Bay Bulls, where you'll board a sightseeing boat for a cruise to Green Island. You'll see hundreds of thousands of Atlantic Puffin, Common Murre, Razorbill, and Black-legged Kittiwake from the sea. Gawk with your mouth closed!

You'll arrive in St. John's this evening, where the food takes a quantum leap forward. Dinner will be at Raymond's Restaurant, where incredible seafood options are available. Our hotel, The Jag, is near the wharf, and if you wish to stroll amongst the many anchored ships, you'll do that this evening.

June 29

Today will be our last full day in Newfoundland. You'll visit Signal Hill, a fort built to take on Germans during WWII should it have become necessary. You'll also venture out to Cape Spear Lighthouse, the most NE point of the North American Continent.

You'll dine at Oliver's Restaurant, which serves some of the best seafood I've ever eaten. It will be a celebratory dinner tonight before we board your flights home tomorrow morning.

June 30

Depart for home!