



ACADIA ALL-AMERICAN ROAD

Built through philanthropy,
this route leads to the best of
Acadia National Park.

Hilary Nangle

Water, water everywhere, or so it seems when driving Maine's 40-mile Acadia All-American Road. This eye-candy route delivers views of the granite-girdled and cliff-edged coastline, freshwater lakes and ponds, quiet and busy harbors, and island- and peninsula-salted horizons. And it showcases the best of Acadia National Park's natural and cultural sights.

This scenic trek starts **near** Trenton, follows state Route 3 across bridges and causeways and around Mount Desert Island's northeastern end, then segues onto Acadia's Park Loop Road before finishing in Bar Harbor, the anchor town of Mount Desert Island. While the route can be driven in fewer than two hours without stops, allow at least three hours.

The Acadia All-American Road's mainland section passes attractions, flightseeing operations and a boatload of roadside lobster pounds en route to the prize: the first glimpse of Acadia's glacier-rounded peaks. If touring midday, Trenton Bridge Lobster Pound is a delicious stop with a fine view.

On Mount Desert Island, the road threads through rural countryside, passing a handful of farms, a saltwater marsh, woodlands and even a winery.

Hikers who reach the top of Gorham Mountain are rewarded with fantastic views of Frenchman Bay.

WALTER BIBIKOW/GETTY IMAGES





Then, just before the right-hand turn for Acadia's Hulls Cove Visitor Center, the road edges Frenchman Bay's shoreline, revealing the Porcupine Islands with Bar Harbor in the distance. After entering the park, turn left onto the Park Loop Road.

ROAD TO WONDER

Created in 1916, Acadia National Park is a monument as much to human ingenuity as to the natural landscape, thanks to its early benefactors. The Park Loop Road is a prime example of Acadia's cultural assets. In 1922, John D. Rockefeller Jr. hired the famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. to design this scenic motor route through the park.

It's easy to while away an hour or more at another one of Acadia's cultural treasures—Sieur de Monts Springs, a woodland oasis

at the base of Dorr Mountain. Here, George Dorr, known as the father of Acadia National Park, built an Italianate springhouse over what he named the Sweet Waters of Acadia.

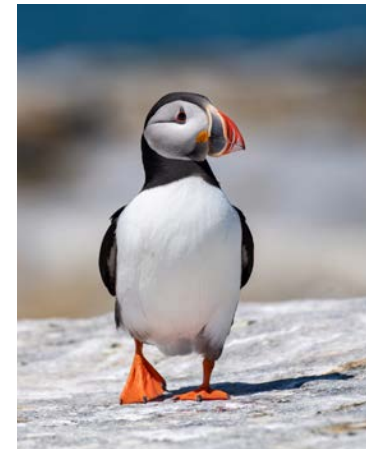
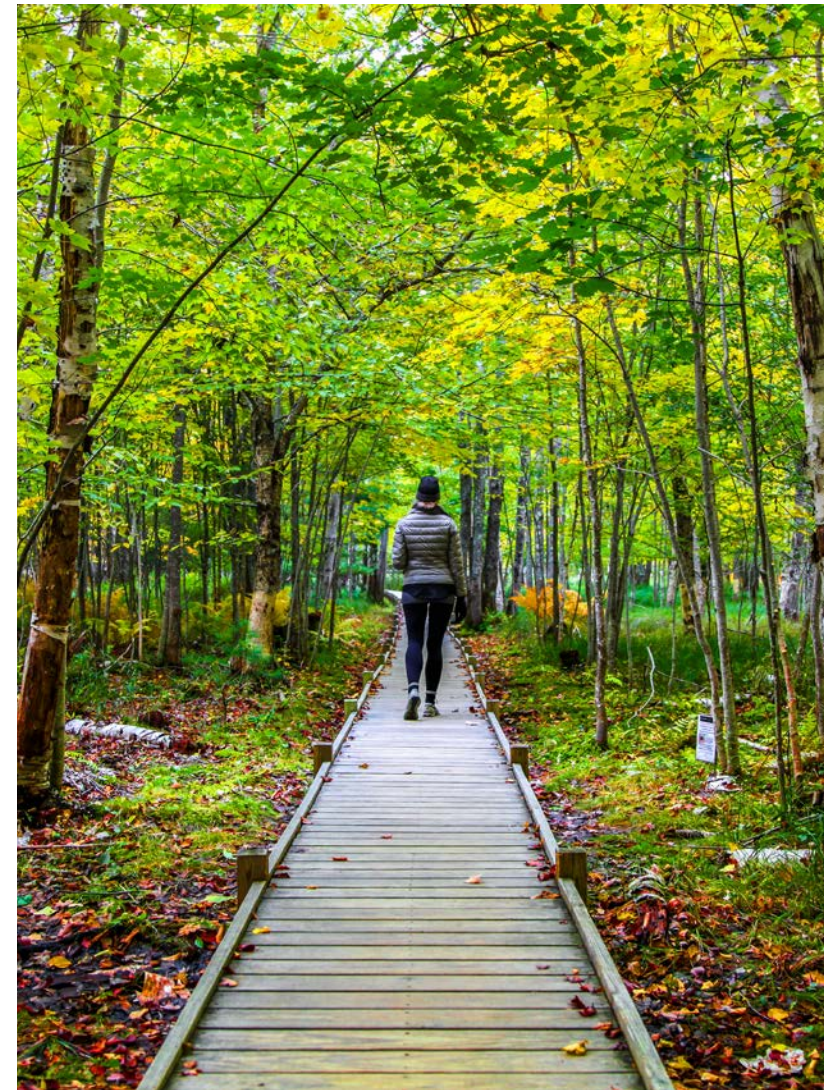
Listen to warblers sing and breezes whisper in the trees while strolling the Wild Gardens of Acadia, where 13 habitats display more than 400 indigenous plants. View exhibits on flora and fauna in the nature center. Visit the original Abbe Museum, opened by Dr. Robert Abbe in 1928 to share his archaeological artifacts.

Follow signs to Homans Path to see an example of a stair trail improved by the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps). And mosey the Jesup Path, an easy interpretive trail through woods,

Acadia National Park is one of the first places in the United States to see the sunrise.

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Clockwise from right: Kayaking on Jordan Pond; a puffin; Jesup Path winds through a forest soon to be filled with fantastic foliage.



Mosey the Jesup Path, an easy interpretive trail through woods, wetlands and the Great Meadow.



Wonders never cease in Acadia, from the sounds of Thunder Hole (above) to humpback whales (right) breaching in the Atlantic Ocean to a gentle sunrise on the horizon (far right).



THUNDER HOLE: A.J. WHITNEY/GETTY IMAGES; WHALE: HONGMING ZHENG/600PX/GETTY IMAGES

SUNRISE: THANG TAT NGUYEN/GETTY IMAGES; BAR HARBOR: DENSTANGNEVIR/GETTY IMAGES

For the perfect ending to the day, watch daylight cede to nightfall in a blaze of glory from Frenchman Bay.

wetlands and the Great Meadow. When autumn colors quilt Acadia's mountains in reds, golds, oranges and browns, it's especially inviting.

ALONG OCEAN DRIVE

Sand Beach marks the start of the Park Loop Road's Ocean Drive section. The next few miles deliver sand and cobble beaches, surf crashing on pink granite shores, spruce-topped cliffs, a rumbling rock formation and mountains tumbling to the sea, all seasoned with salty air, crying seabirds and ringing bell buoys.

Ocean tides and storm patterns determine whether Thunder Hole

earns its name or if it's more of, as one ranger quipped, a "gurgling gulch." The best time to experience the roar and reverberation is one to two hours before high tide, especially after a storm when sea spray may soar more than 40 feet.

Otter Cliff, a 110-foot-high pink granite headland, is among the highest along the Eastern Seaboard. While checking out the view, listen for the clanging bell buoy marking the Spindle, an offshore ledge.

Another of Acadia's constructed highlights is the park's carriage

road system. Rockefeller worked with Beatrix Farrand, a founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, to design the roadside plantings along the 45 miles of broken-stone carriage roads, which are accented with 17 unique, rough-stone bridges. As the Park Loop Road gets closer to Seal Harbor and Wildwood Stables, it passes under a few.

Many of the carriage roads lead to the Jordan Pond House. Dating back more than a century but rebuilt after a 1979 fire, the current teahouse isn't as quaint as the original. Still, the serene views across Jordan Pond to the Bubble mountains haven't changed. Nor

has the tradition of enjoying them from the lawn while sipping tea and savoring popovers with jam.

Cadillac Mountain is the highest point along the Atlantic coastline and is famous for its first-in-the-country sunrise. Walk the path ringing the summit (vehicle reservation required) for stunning views and scan the skies for mighty raptors soaring overhead.

For the perfect ending to the day, return to Bar Harbor and watch daylight cede to nightfall in a blaze of glory on a glorious sunset sail in Frenchman Bay. 🌅

EXPLORE ACADIA

Hilary shares a few insider tips to get the most out of your visit.

PLAN AHEAD

Purchase a park vehicle pass and a timed **Cadillac Summit Road** reservation at [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov). Note: A reservation doesn't guarantee a summit parking space. Also, be sure to make a reservation for the **Jordan Pond House** at [jordanpondhouse.com](https://www.jordanpondhouse.com). For a quieter experience, start by 8 a.m. or after 3 p.m.

CALL IT A NIGHT IN BAR HARBOR

Staying in downtown Bar Harbor avoids parking hassles and puts restaurants and attractions just steps away.



STOCK UP

For breakfast or picnic fare, snacks, or gas, stop at **Hulls Cove General Stores**, set back from Route 3 at the intersection with Breakneck Road, just south of the park's Hulls Cove Visitor Center entrance.

DETOUR

Get a close-up of **Stanley Brook Bridge**, one of Acadia's most handsome carriage road bridges. Turn left off the Park Loop Road onto Stanley Brook Road in Seal Harbor. The triple-arched bridge crosses over in less than a half-mile.