

Traveling the Waters of Nova Scotia

The waters surrounding Nova Scotia are rife with legend – some more fanciful than others – like tales from the past when whales were seen as sea monsters rising from the depth, or stories of pirate treasures buried beneath the waves, rum–running and ghostly galleons ablaze on moonlit nights.



For those looking for a more realism, there are stories of the people of Nova Scotia. There are men like Samuel Cunard who started off with whalers sailing from Nova Scotia to the Pacific, and ended up founding the great Cunard Line. Donald McKay is another example. He was noted most for building clipper ships and then went on to be a famous naval architect.

Fishing, ship–building and sea faring are all part of the province's colorful nautical heritage. Legends are bound to be rife.

There is always the chance to hear more. One of the attractions of Nova Scotia is the warm welcome on offer from a people linked to the sea. There's plenty of spare time to relax and unwind, and plenty of sea to share. Over 7,400 staggering kilometers of coastline around the peninsula. The stunning scenery matches the legends.

Along the Cape Breton Highlands you can follow in the paths of the glaciers over spectacular rocky cliffs that plunge into the sea. You can visit the vast bogs, windswept barrens, broad valleys and down through deep–walled canyons. The world–famous Cabot Trail, a modern coastal highway, winds through the highlands and offers a thrilling overview of the park.

Step back in time at the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site which has been faithfully recreated to represent 1744 Louisbourg. The Fortress, the largest historical reconstruction in North America, features the sights, smells and sounds of the busy fort as it must have been over 200 years ago. It is open from June 1 to September 30.

Another National Historic Site not to miss in Nova Scotia is Halifax Citadel. The site of three previous fortifications dating to 1749, the citadel today offers views of Halifax, the harbor and the past. There are exhibits to amuse all tastes, from the ramparts and vaulted rooms to a 50–minute audio–visual presentation of Halifax and its defenses. Halifax Citadel is open from June 15 to Labour Day.

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Stroll in the street, enjoy period food, and talk to the locals. They might tell you of Grassy Island, once a prosperous fishing community that was besieged and destroyed in the spring of 1744. Another casualty of the Anglo–French rivalry for North America. Take a boat ride to the island and explore the quiet ruins.

On the mainland, there is the gentle, quiet beauty of Kejimikujik National Park where the lush woodlands, gentle rolling landscape and numerous lakes and rivers are home to an abundance of wildlife. You'll find white-tail deer, porcupine, beaver and perhaps even the rare Blanding's turtle.

Canada is known for its system of national parks and historic sites but nowhere is this rich diversity of the unique natural and cultural heritage more evident than in Nova Scotia. Nowhere else are there such opportunities for adventure, romance and mystery. For in Nova Scotia, wherever you are, you're never far from the sea.

By Austin Keith

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Date: 2011-10-31

Article link:

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