

Maine Conservation Recreation Forum

Maine's Outdoor Recreation Economy: Past, Present and Future

Presented by:
Maine Office of Tourism

MAINE'S MISSION

Become the premier four-season
destination in New England

Maine

Become the premier four-season
destination in New England

RESEARCH DRIVEN

Demographic – Visitors & Prospects

Psychographic - Prospects

Visitor Research

- **The specific objectives of the program are:**
 - to identify Maine's share of the travel market;
 - to quantify the number of visitors who come to Maine;
 - to estimate the amount of spending devoted to tourism in Maine;
 - to profile the Maine traveler – including where they come from, who they travel with, where they go in the state and what they do.

Maine Office of Tourism Maine Woods Presentation

Prepared by



April 2012



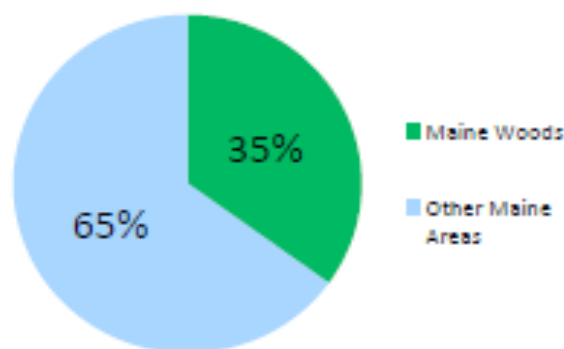
Full report available at MOTPartners.com

Overnight Leisure Visitor Demographics

- About one-third of Maine overnight visitors had a primary destination in the Maine Woods regions of Maine.
- Maine Woods visitors skew younger and tend to have a lower income level than coastal visitors.

2010 Maine Overnight Visitors

Base = 2,992

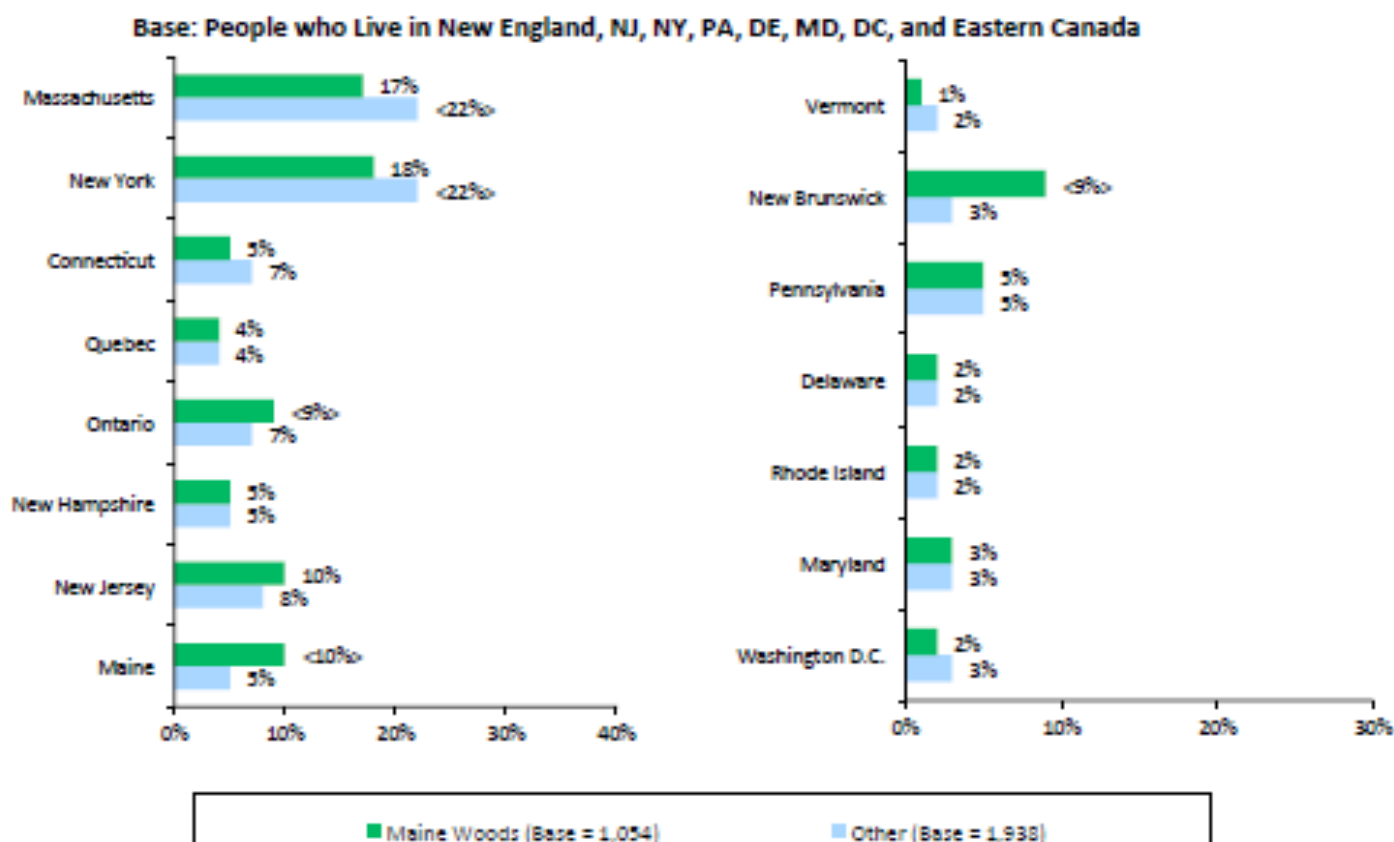


2010		
	Maine Woods (Base=1,054)	Other (Base=1,938)
Mean Age	42.3	<45.2>
< 35	<36%>	29%
35 - 44	20%	19%
45 - 54	20%	22%
55 +	23%	<30%>
Mean Income	\$100,720	<\$106,760>
< \$50,000	<17%>	12%
\$50,000 - \$99,000	38%	35%
\$100,000 +	33%	<37%>
Female	44%	47%
College Degree or Higher	77%	78%
Married	53%	57%
Employed Full Time	66%	64%
Length of Stay	3.7	3.6

<> notes significant difference at 95% confidence level

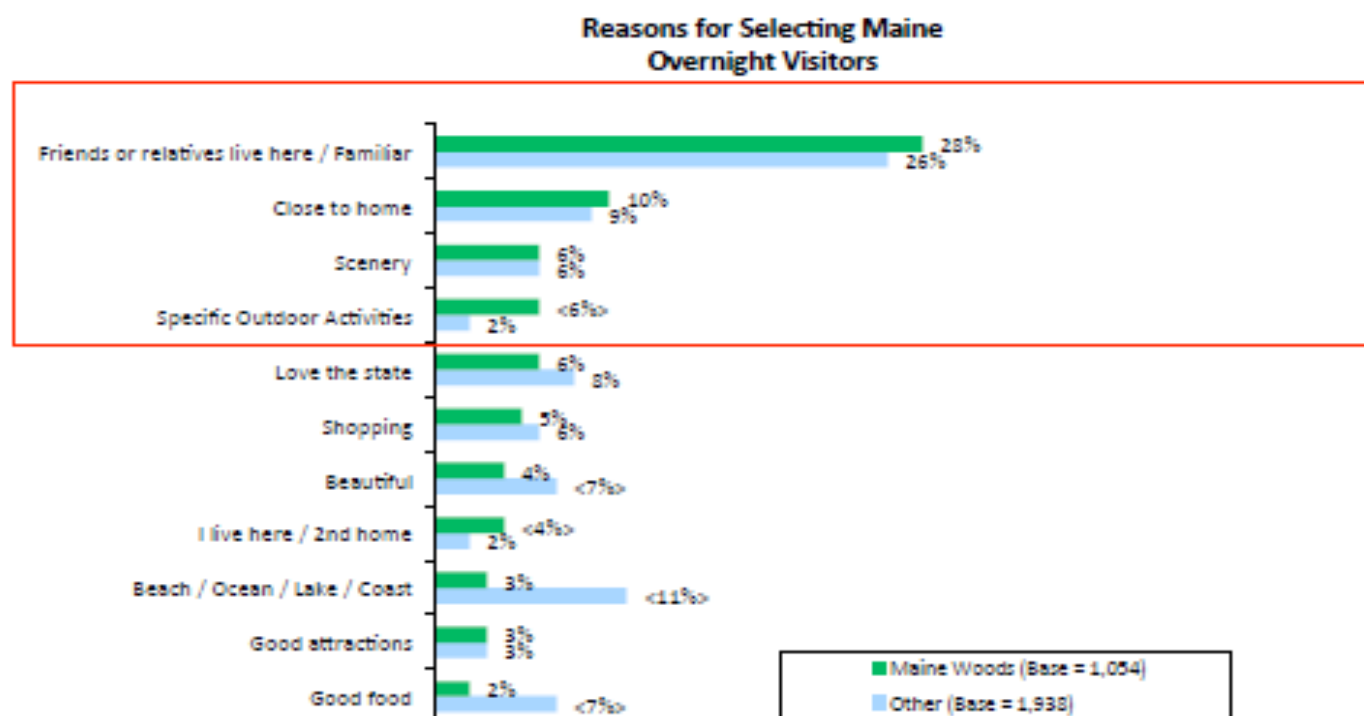
Overnight Leisure Visitor Residence:

- As with the rest of the state, many visitors to the Maine Woods hail from Massachusetts and New York, although Maine Woods visitors are more likely to call New Brunswick, Ontario, or Maine home.



Reasons for Selecting Maine

- Maine Woods visitors are more likely than their counterparts to cite a specific outdoor activity or that they own a 2nd home/timeshare as a reason for selecting Maine. They are not likely to focus on the state's beauty, presence of the ocean, or good food.



Overnight & Day Visitor Spending

- Overall, when comparing Maine Woods visitors to those seeking other areas of Maine, per trip spending is quite similar.
- However, Maine Woods overnight visitors tend to spend more on recreation in particular, not surprising given the focus of their trips on activities.

2010 Overnight Travel Spending		
	Maine Woods	Other
Net Spending	\$641	\$678
Spending by Category:		
Lodging*	\$170	\$220
Transportation*	\$100	\$75
Food*	\$130	\$195
Retail Goods**	\$170	\$155
Recreation**	\$51 	\$33

2010 Day Travel Spending		
	Maine Woods	Other
Net Spending	\$174	\$177
Spending by Category:		
Lodging*	NA	NA
Transportation*	\$40	\$30
Food*	\$40	\$50
Retail Goods**	\$80	\$84
Recreation**	\$14	\$14

*Medians include zero without outliers

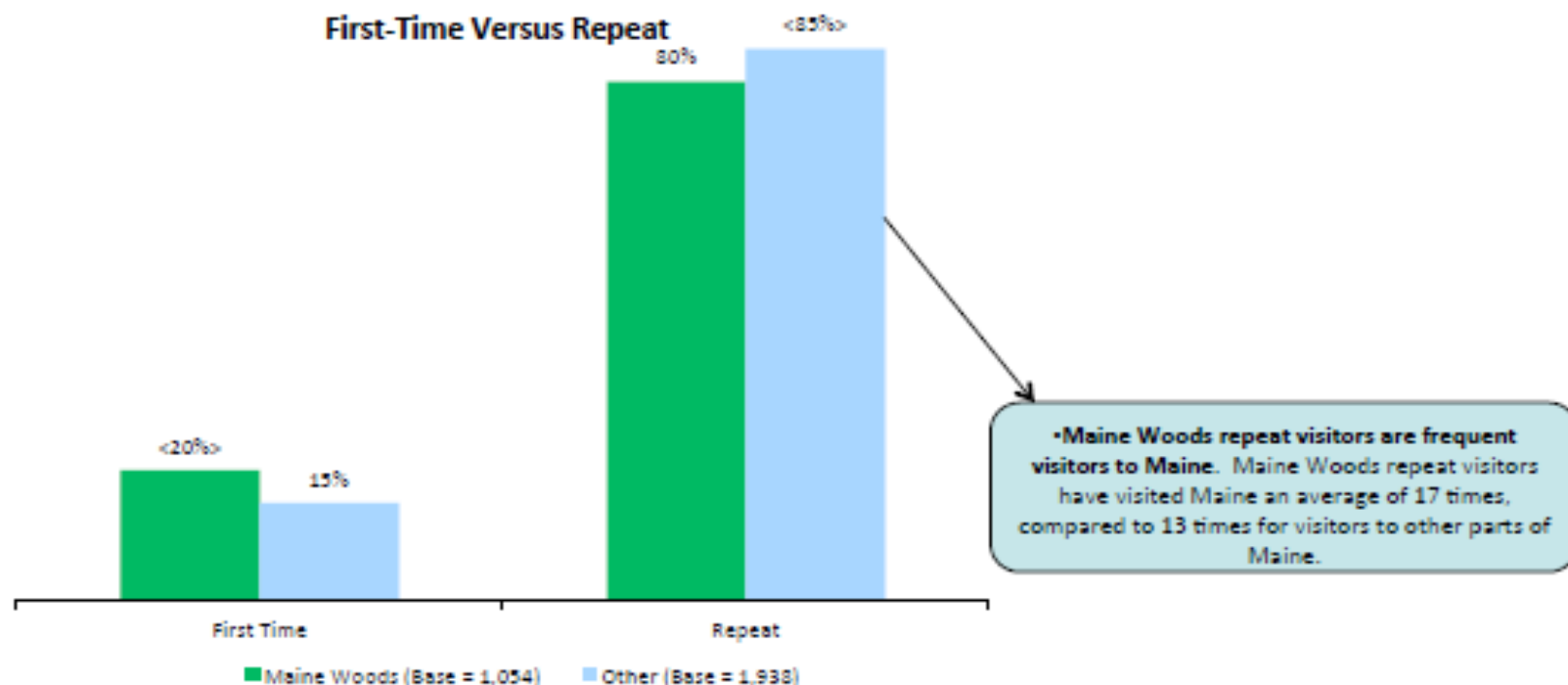
** Means including zero without outliers

Regional Q33 & Day Q14. Please tell us the amount of money you and your immediate travel party spent on this trip in Maine in each of 20 the following categories below.

  notes significant difference at 95% confidence level

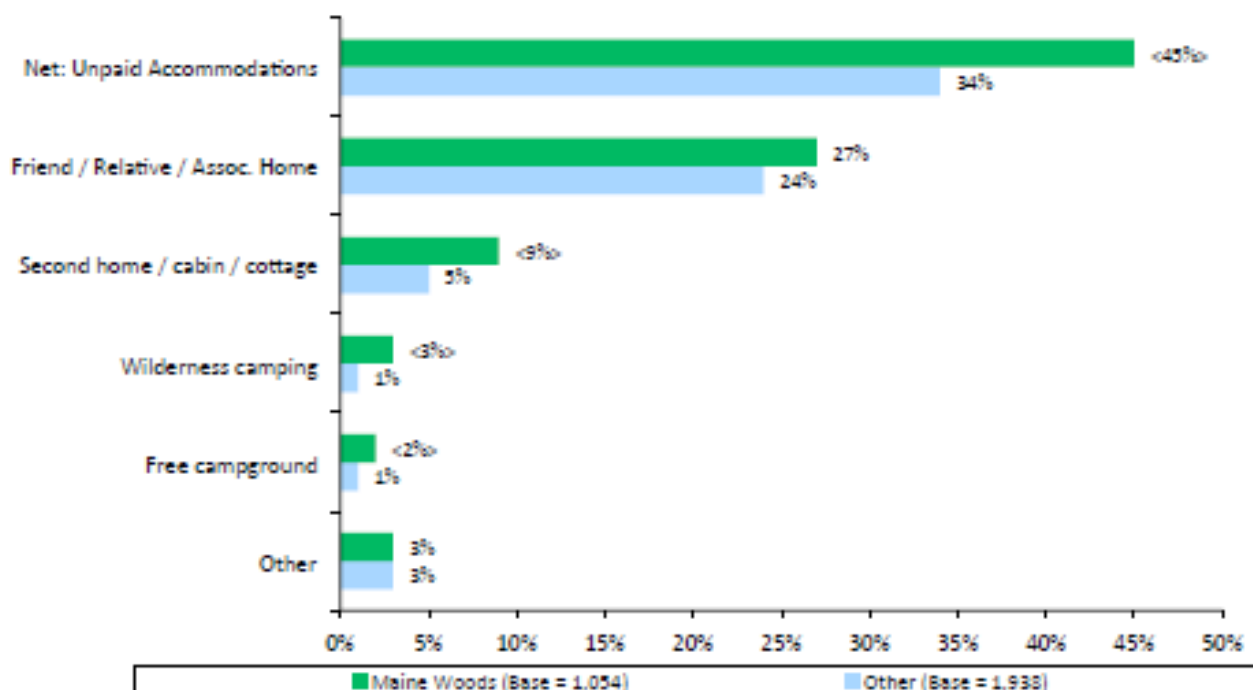
Repeat versus First Time Visitors

- One-in-five Maine Woods visitors are first time visitors to the state, demonstrating that the woods tend to be a greater draw for new visitors than the coastline, which shows stronger repeat visitation.



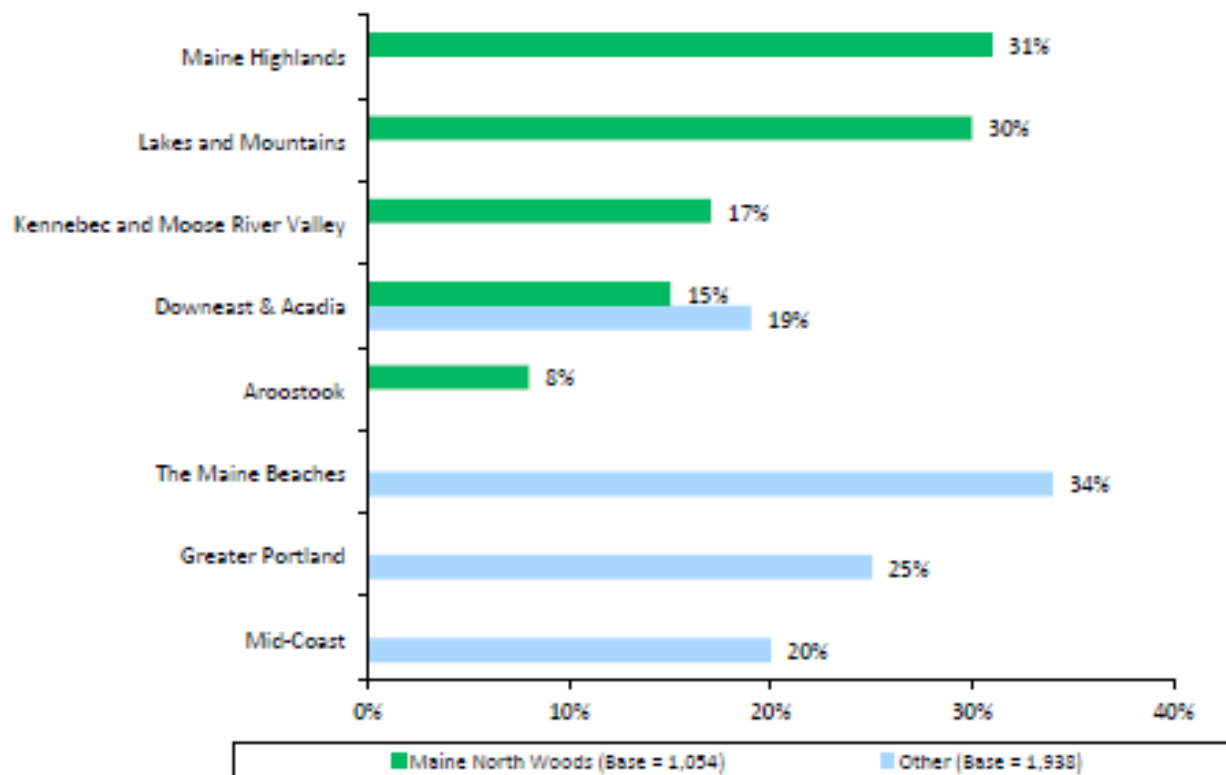
Unpaid Accommodations While in Maine

- Rather, Maine Woods visitors are more likely to stay in a second home/cabin/cottage/condo that they own, or spend time camping while visiting Maine.



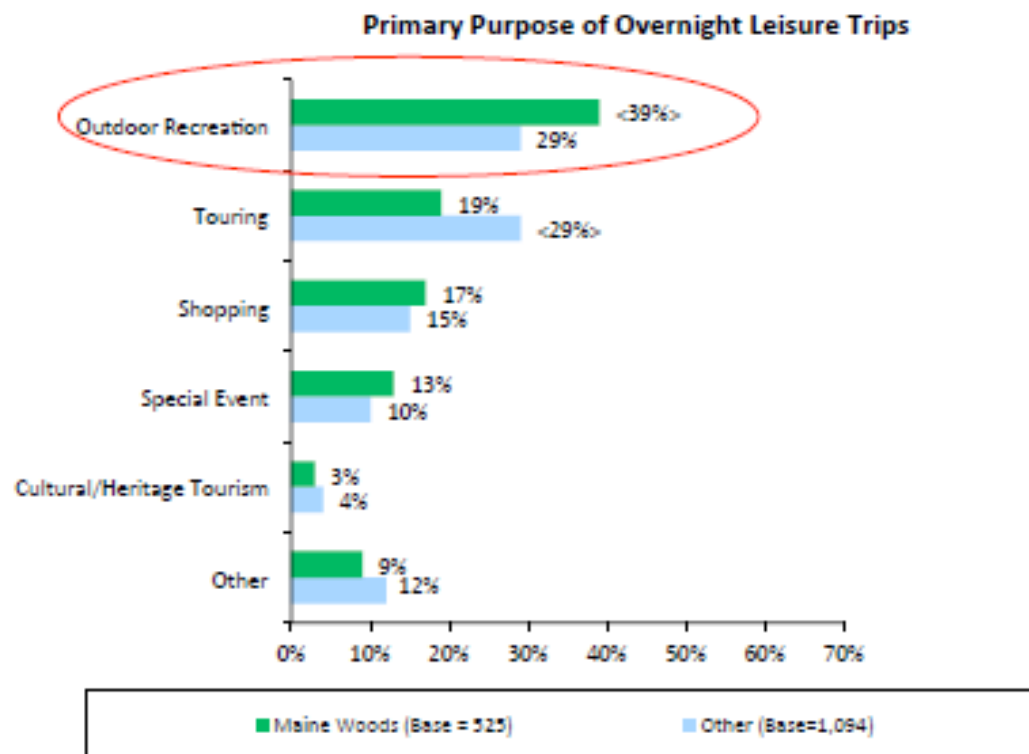
Primary Region of Visit to Maine – Maine Woods *Visitors*

- Maine Woods visitors are most likely to visit the *Maine Highlands* or *Lakes and Mountains* region as the primary destination of their trip.



Primary Purpose of Overnight Leisure Trips

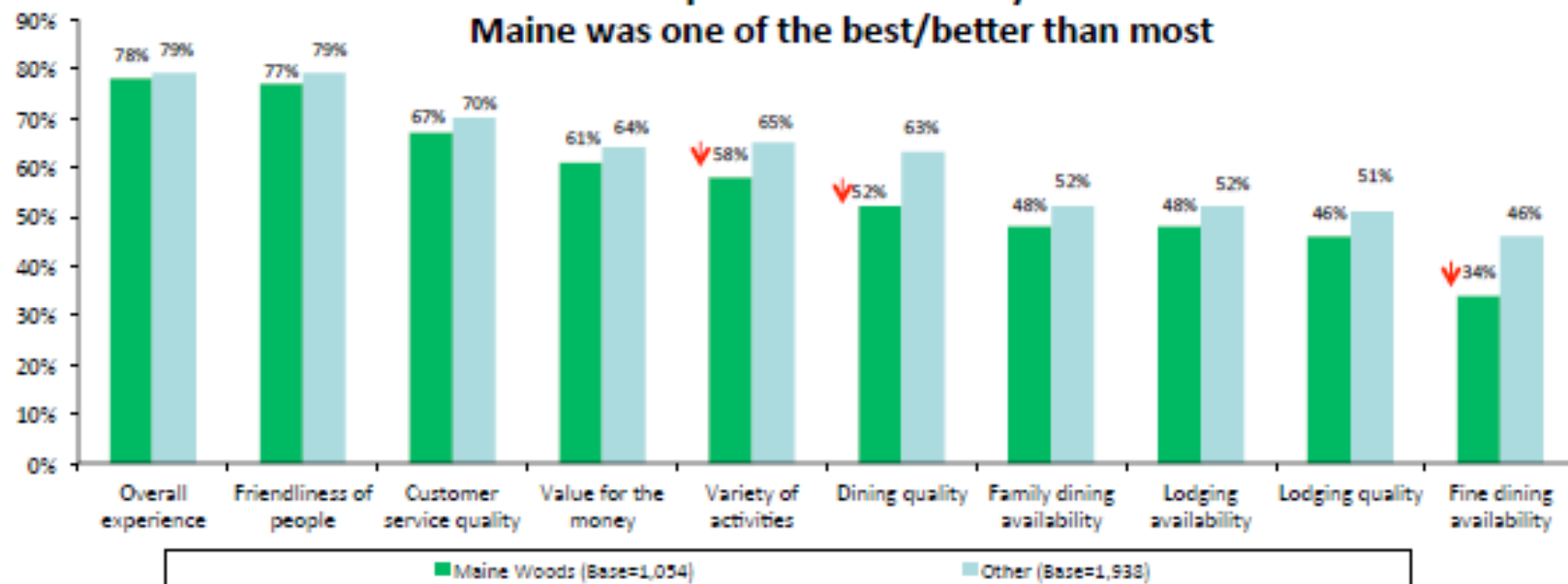
- Those visiting the Maine Woods are more likely to be visiting Maine to take advantage of outdoor recreation opportunities. Those visiting other regions are more likely to consider the primary reason for their trip to be a touring vacation.



Comparison of Maine to Other Destinations

- Significant differences are particularly evident in visitors' perceptions of Maine's dining, with Maine Woods visitors rating Maine lower for both *quality* and *availability of fine dining*.
- Additionally, Maine Woods visitors are less likely to rank Maine highly for *variety of activities*, despite already high engagement of these travelers, they may be seeking even more to do.

Top Two Box Summary: Maine was one of the best/better than most



Summary

- About one out of every three Maine visitors primary destination on their trip to Maine is within the Maine Woods regions of Maine. These visitors tend to be younger than visitors to other parts of Maine, with slightly lower income.
- They tend to be more frequent travelers, in particular they take more VFR and business trips. The VFR travel is noteworthy, as these travelers tend to be engaged with friends and family on their trips to Maine.
- They also are engaged in specific outdoor activities to a greater degree than their coastal counterparts. Their trips seem to be about people and activities, and the Maine Woods provides the right atmosphere to enjoy time with their friends, and engaging in the activities they love.
- Maine Woods visitors tend to give the state lower ratings for its dining, as well as lower ratings for its breadth of activities despite being a more activity-engaged group.
- Overall spending is similar across both groups of travelers, with Maine Woods visitors spending a bit less on lodging and food, but more on retail shopping, transportation, and recreation.
- Importantly, Maine Woods visitors are more likely to be first time visitors to Maine than coastal visitors. This suggests that the Maine Woods can be an avenue to introduce younger visitors to the state, feeding the funnel of future visitation. In fact, repeat visitors to the Maine Woods are among Maine's most frequent and loyal visitors.

Demographic Changes

- Aging society
- Having children later in life
- Families with fewer children
- Wider range of household types
- Greater ethnic diversity
- Rural depopulation

Travel Trends

- **Strong spend by the younger generation**
 - Gen Y and X are spending on luxury – but want good value.
- **Value continues to be king**
 - even the affluent are focused on good value.
- **Competing globally**
 - 68% of Americans plan to travel outside the US
- **“Diverse aware”**
 - dual pronged strategy for over 50 and under 50.
 - Cultural differences

Travel Trends

- **Technology and Travel**
 - Easy to log on while traveling
 - Mobil devices/Small Screen – smartphones, iPads
 - Social networks become more important to trip planning
 - People get advice from friends, not strangers
 - Information overload on the Web
 - Difficult to sift content to find authentic suggestions and advice
 - Travel agencies and one-stop shops for tailored vacations

Travel Trends

- Caution – Curation – Contentment – Convenience
 - Caution – Consumers are vigilant. Want vacation that is risk free.
 - Curation – Circles of intimacy – manage information and relationships.
 - Contentment – Spontaneity and fun snatched away. Well-being and meaning will define context of happiness.
 - Convenience - Empowered consumer wants more choices

Outdoor Trends

- Seek meaningful outdoor experiences
- Diverse demographic
- Outdoor recreation is an essential part of daily life
- Strengthens local communities
- Leaders across the country realize economic, social and health benefits
 - No longer a nice to have, now a must have
- Spend more - occurs in two forms
 - trips & travel
 - gear & vehicles

Outdoor Recreation Economy Report by the Outdoor Industry Association

Outdoor Trends

- Youth participation declining, ages 6 to 12
 - 2011- 63%; 2006 -78%
- Outdoor Participation Total
 - 2011- 49.4%; 2006 -49.1%
- Most popular activities among young people and similarly adults
 - Running
 - Biking,
 - Camping
 - Fishing
 - Hiking

Outdoor Trends

Activities showing significant 3 year growth

- Telemarking 46%
- Snowshoeing 41%
- Recreational kayaking 32%
- Triathlon 28%
- Whitewater kayaking 24%
- Bow hunting 24%
- Adventure racing 16%

Outdoor Participation Topline Report 2012 – Outdoor Foundation

Types of Tourism

Ecotourism - "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people" *TIES, 1990*

Cultural heritage tourism - "traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources." *National Trust for Historic Preservation*

Sustainable tourism - "maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them. "
World Tourism Organization, 2004

Types of Tourism

Responsible tourism -

- minimizes negative social, economic and environmental impacts
- generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities
- improves working conditions and access to the industry
- involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances
- makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage embracing diversity
- provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues
- provides access for physically challenged people
- is culturally sensitive, encourages respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence

Types of Tourism

Voluntourism - form of travel where one volunteers on projects which give back to the community.

Nature-based tourism - Leisure travel undertaken largely or solely for the purpose of enjoying natural attractions and engaging in a variety of outdoor activities. Bird watching, hiking, fishing, and beachcombing are all examples of nature-based tourism.


Geotourism - similar to sustainable tourism and is a definition brought about by National Geographic Traveller...the concept is the same but they focus on the 'sense of place' in an area rather than the industry's efforts.

General Principles

- Connection to community
- Locally products
- Historic preservation
- Sustainable use of resources
- Telling the story
- Authenticity

MARKETING STRATEGIES

- Rejuvenate/refresh the Maine brand to make it relevant and contemporary.
- Convert aspiration to visitation among first time visitors.
- Use research and data analytics to focus on those markets that have the highest propensity to deliver new visitors staying in paid accommodations.
- Employ a clear two-pronged approach:
ACQUISITION – entice first time visitors
RETENTION – give past visitors a reason to return

- 
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TARGETING BY SPECIAL INTEREST

People Pursue their Passions

- Special interest activities will draw visitors from a wider geographic area giving Maine increased exposure beyond New England/Canada
- People will find time and money to pursue the activities about which they are passionate.

Special Interest Segments To be Targeted Through Paid Media


- Hiking/Climbing
- Cycling
- Paddling
- Wildlife Watching
- Outdoor Adventure
- Culinary
- Cultural Tourism
- Winter Sports

*Special interests chosen based on those with the greatest amount of overnight visitation

CREATE BRAND CRAVING

A state of being more valuable than the
"things" – activities, vistas, sites, food, etc.

Maine needs to become an antidote for
something missing in consumers' lives




A state of being more valuable than the
“things” – activities, vistas, sites, food, etc.

Maine needs to become an antidote for
something missing in consumers' lives

- What is the Maine attitude?
- What does the Maine experience feel like?
- What personal values (core human values) burn more brightly in Maine and in a Maine vacation experience?
- What is the authentic sense of place that Maine delivers?
- Where does the Maine brand intersect with or reflect vacationer's sense of self/their personal identities?

offbeat
one-of-a-kind
authentic
pragmatism
recreation
harmony
utility
independence
friendliness
quaint
peaceful
candor
awe
quirky
freedom
mindfulness
practicality
solitude
stillness
adventure
calmness
nature
self-reliance
simplicity
purity
beauty
intimacy
clear-mindedness
reverence

We need to create an emotional connection between the Maine brand and potential visitors, that operates on a personal level, and drives visitation—especially among first-timers.



WHERE YOU
CAN FOLLOW
YOUR INNER
COMPASS AND
BE COMPLETELY
YOURSELF

**DIFFERENTIATED
BRAND BENEFIT**

Creative STRATEGY



Maine

THE REAL THING.
FROM REAL PEOPLE.
GIVING REAL ADVICE.

THE MAINE THING

is

Not needing a GPS to
KNOW YOU'RE IN EXACTLY
the right place.



The fresh Atlantic air. The gorgeous views. The natural, mountainous landscape. It's easy to get lost in all the beauty that is Maine. But for those who may actually get lost, there's Mainers like registered guide Steven Voss, who says there are a hundred places he could go to in Maine and be happy. Those fantastic places that are truly Maine include climbing majestic Mt. Katahdin, hiking beautiful Baxter State Park and fishing on picturesque Rangeley Lake. No matter where you go, a life-changing experience awaits. **Maine** Be inspired. Be adventurous. Be yourself. Discover your Maine Thing. To learn more, go to VisitMaine.com.



STEVEN, Human Compass
Get more insider info at VisitMaine.com

THE MAINE THING

is

Going off the beaten
PATH TO GET YOURSELF
back on track.



Maine is the first state to see the sunrise everyday. No wonder we're all about the outdoors. If you ask Bronwyn, she'll tell you there are one-of-a-kind adventures around every corner, including Tumbledown Mountain, which is blanketed by blueberry fields. Or Mount Megallowick, with its gorgeous views of the Penobscot Bay and Camden Hills. And Mount Katahdin, along the Appalachian Trail, is simply stunning. No big deal if you forget something. Out here, you might forget everything. **Maine** Be inspired. Be adventurous. Be yourself. Discover your Maine Thing. To learn more, go to VisitMaine.com.



BRONWYN, Fresh Air-aholic
Get more insider info at VisitMaine.com

Maine



To get around in most states, you need a map. Here you need a menu too. It seems no matter where you go, there are amazing culinary creations around every scenic corner. Just ask Kathy, who traveled to Maine over 20 years ago. 14 cookbooks later she is now an aficionado of everything Maine food. From the tremendous gourmet restaurants like Fore Street in Portland, to the bustling food industry which includes Stonewall Kitchens in York. In other words, the views and the ingredients here are infinite. Which means the scenery isn't the only thing you'll eat up when you come here. Be inspired. Be adventurous. Be yourself. Discover your Maine Thing. To learn more, go to VisitMaine.com.

Maine



KATHY, Food Aficionado
Get more Insider Info at VisitMaine.com



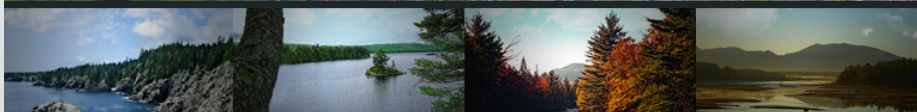
If you're like us, hearing the words "forecast" and "snowstorm" in the same sentence is music to your ears. Well, in Maine, a fresh snowfall opens up more adventures for snowmobilers than you can imagine. We get more snow here than the rest of New England. And our signed and groomed trails are connected to local businesses, restaurants and lodging. Snowmobilers rave about the amazing trails in Aroostook County, Rangeley, Jackman, The Forks, Greenville, Millinocket and Shin Pond. So get ready to put your thumb on that throttle. Be inspired. Be adventurous. Be yourself. Discover your Maine Thing. To learn more, go to VisitMaine.com.

Maine



TRAILS MADE *by* GLACIERS JUST *for you.*

Some of the most demanding yet inspiring hikes take place in Maine. From the coast to the highlands, along the lakes and mountains, Maine's trails are truly off the beaten path, and ready to be conquered.



BOLD COAST

100-MILE WILDERNESS

THE GRAFTON NOTCH

BIGELOW RANGE TRAIL

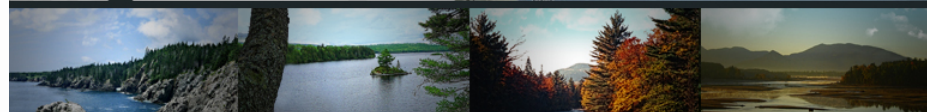
BOLD COAST NATURE *in* BALANCE



HIKING THE BOLD COAST

The Cutler Coast trail offers the experienced backpacker a hike that is full of varying terrain with a combination of forest and coast. The scenery is unexpected and beautiful. From dramatic cliffs to serene shores, fragrant pine forests to vast meadows, this unspoiled landscape is a balance of natural elements.

Come with experience and high expectations, knowing that you'll leave with a new understanding of your passion for backpacking, your environment and yourself.



BOLD COAST

100-MILE WILDERNESS

THE GRAFTON NOTCH

BIGELOW RANGE TRAIL

[Create Page](#)

Now

December

2012

2011

2010

2009

Joined Facebook

Maine Office of Tourism

60,297 likes · 6,438 talking about this

Like

Message

Travel/Leisure

Thanks for visiting the official Facebook page for the Maine Office of Tourism. It's winter in Maine. The season for skiing and snowboarding, skating,

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3 ▾

Highlights ▾

Post

Photo / Video

Write something...



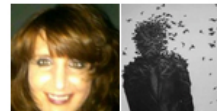
Share

**Maine Office of Tourism** shared a link.
27 minutes ago

Enjoy playing in the snow this weekend, but heed the warning from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife that many lakes, ponds and rivers still have open water and are not safe to be on. Talk to locals to find out where to enjoy the snow safely.
<http://bangordailynews.com/2013/01/02/outdoors/theres-no-safe-ice-on-maine-lakes-rivers-and-ponds-officials-say/>

2 Friends

Like Maine Office of Tourism



Recent Posts by Others on Maine Office of Tourism

[See All](#)**Steve Phillips**

Wintah' comin' on Strong!

1 · 2 hours ago

**Annie McClimont**

Can anyone tell me when the school summer vacation...

5 · 4 hours ago

**Andrew Mooers**

Crisp Fresh Maine Air, Under Cobalt Blue Skies, Bat...

1 · 6 hours ago

ALL NEW
VisitMaine.com

MAINE

THINGS TO DOPLACES TO GOWHERE TO STAYPLAN YOUR VISIT

SEARCH

f


t

THE MAINE THING

is

Where original people perfectly complement the beauty of this place. Explore and discover what the Maine Thing is all about. So be inspired. Be adventurous. Be yourself. Discover your Maine Thing.

MEET the MAINE INSIDERS



Being in a state that wraps
ITS ARMS AROUND YOU AND
absolutely welcomes you.

Featured
OFFERS

CHOOSE A SEASON

Filter your site experience by the season >


SPRING

SUMMER

FALL


WINTER

FEATURED CONTENT




DOWNTOWN SHOPPING
Maine's downtowns reward shoppers with more than prized finds. Three, Portland, Bath, and Rockland, have Distinctive Destination status from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, recognized for their authentic...

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DAY HIKING
From the coast to the foothills and mountains to the North Woods, Maine's natural beauty and abundant wildlife beckons. For outdoor enthusiasts desiring to hike to the woods and explore on foot for the day, more...

READ MORE >



MOOSE WATCHING
Maine is lucky enough to be one of only a few states in the U.S. that have a sizeable moose population. State biologists estimate the Maine moose population to be around 29,000. That's the second largest...

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WHAT type OF TRAVELER are you?

Filter your site experience by your interests.

☒ FIRST TIME VISITOR

☐ RETURNING VISITOR

☐ IN-STATE EXPLORER

Filter by adjusting slider to your traveler type

FREE SPIRIT VISITOR

NO HASSLE TRAVELER

MAINE

HOME

PRIVACY POLICY

SITE ACCESSIBILITY

SITE MAP

CONTACT US

DISCOVER MAINE

MAINE STORIES

WEDDING RESOURCES

UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES

LIBRARY DIRECTORIES

SUMMER CAMPS

MEDIA ROOM

TOURISM PARTNERS

TOURISM WORKS FOR ME

GROUP TOURS

MAINE IS FOR MEETINGS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MADE IN MAINE

DOING BUSINESS

FREE TRAVEL PLANNING

EMAIL SIGN UP

PHOTOS & VIDEOS

FEEDBACK

t

f

ig

Enhance user experience & content
Improve design & functionality
Apply new technology

Enhance user experience & content

- Simplify navigation

- Improve content {more experiential and emotive}

- Multiple paths to content

- Alignment with key vacation planning stages

- Content based on user preference

- Increased exposure to partners outside of listings

- Better mobile experience

Improve design and functionality

- Editorial / magazine layout style cues

- Contemporary design elements

- Display content in 'snack-able' structure

- Evolve trip planner functionality

- Imagery and typography to help tell the story

- Adaptive design for multi-screen and multi-device consumption

Apply new technologies

New content management system

Improved search integration

Advanced mapping functionality

New development techniques



AGRICULTURAL
ATTRACTIONS



SIGHTSEEING &
TOURS



HISTORY &
HERITAGE



ARTS &
ENTERTAINMENT



OUTDOOR
ACTIVITIES



ON THE WATER



DINING



WILDLIFE



STATE &
NATIONAL PARKS



NIGHTLIFE



SHOPPING



GAMING &
WAGERING

Uniquely
Maine

SEE ACTIVITIES



Paddlers seeking fun, adventure and amazing natural beauty will find what they're looking for on Maine's abundant inland and coastal waters.





CHOOSE a SEASON

Filter your site experience by the season >



SPRING



SUMMER



FALL



WINTER

FEATURED CONTENT



SKIING

Majestic mountain vistas, abundant snowfall, impeccably groomed trails, tree-studded glades, powerful snow-making, short lines and high-speed lifts – that's Maine skiing at its legendary best, and why skiers and...

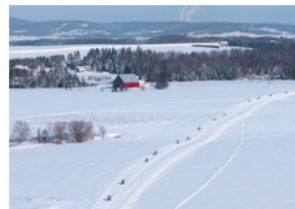
[READ MORE >](#)



DOG SLEDDING

Imagine bounding across the frozen expanse of a remote lake surrounded by mountain peaks clad in evergreens, holding tight to the reins of your dog team as they drive your sled forward through the deep snow...

[READ MORE >](#)



SNOWMOBILING

One of the best ways to enjoy Maine's stunning winter landscape is to climb aboard a snowmobile, rev up the engine and ride to your hearts content. Our state is the premier snowmobiling destination in the...

[READ MORE >](#)

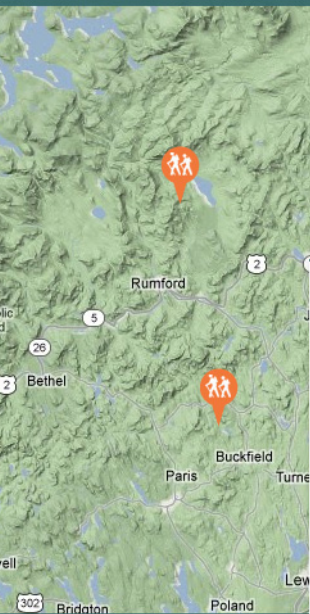
WHAT *type* OF TRAVELER are you?

Filter your site experience by your interests.

- ☒ FIRST TIME VISITOR
- ☐ RETURNING VISITOR
- ☐ IN-STATE EXPLORER

Filter by adjusting slider to your traveler type





Old Town
Orono
Bangor

UNFOLD MAP

◀ BACK TO OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

HIKING & WALKING

One of the best ways to see Maine is on foot, whether you want to tour one of our cities, take a day hike to a waterfall, stroll along a beach with your children or go backpacking along a stretch of the Appalachian Trail.

The [Grafton Loop Trail](#) winds around the rugged [Grafton Notch](#) on a spectacular 40 mile route through the Mahoosuc Mountains that includes a trek over 4,180-foot Old Speck, Maine's fourth highest peak.

READ MORE ▼



FILTER CONTENT BY:

TOPIC

- BACKPACKING
- DAY HIKING
- HIKES WITH KIDS
- WALKING TOURS

show more topics

LOCATION

- AROOSTOOK COUNTY
- DOWNEAST & ACADIA
- GREATER PORTLAND & CASCO BAY
- KENNEBEC & MOOSE RIVER VALLEYS
- MAINE'S LAKES & MOUNTAINS
- MIDCOAST
- THE MAINE BEACHES
- THE MAINE HIGHLANDS: BANGOR, KATAHDIN & MOOSEHEAD LAKE

SEASON

- 🌱 SPRING
- ☀️ SUMMER
- 🍂 FALL
- ❄️ WINTER

STORIES

Search within 25 results



A HIKER'S TABLOID

SPOON was a 100 Mile Wilderness thru-hiker. Like many of his (or her) Appalachian Trail (AT) and 100 Mile Wilderness thru-hiking...

30 LIKES



WINTER FUN ON PUBLIC TRAILS

On a sparkling winter day, one of the most magical ways to take in Maine's landscape is to venture out on cross-country skis...

22 LIKES



DAY HIKING

From the coast to the foothills and mountains to the North Woods, Maine's natural beauty and abundant wildlife beckons. For outdoor enthusiasts desiring to take to the woods and explore on foot for the day more than...

17 LIKES

SHOW MORE ▼ VIEW ALL ▶

YOU MIGHT LIKE

Search within 26 results



FEATURED INSIDERS



THE GUIDE TO THE WILD
Steve Vose. He'll be your beacon for unique and remarkable adventures.



AN OUTSIDER FROM 9 TO 5
Bronwyn Potthoff. Depending on where you are, it's just better to get around on foot.



THE OUTDOOR ADVENTURER
Barry Tripp. An adventurer who typifies the Maine outdoor sports enthusiast.

VIEW ALL INSIDERS

TRIP IDEAS



VILES ARBORETUM
the Arboretum's two dozen plant and tree collections, provide endless opportunity...



WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY
Immerse yourself in a uniquely Maine photography workshop.

VIEW MORE TRIP IDEAS



AN OUTSIDER FROM 9 TO 5. BRONWYN POTTOFF.

With a diverse landscape, Maine is a playground of outdoor activities. As an outdoor enthusiast, Bronwyn spends her waking hours exploring Maine's natural terrain. She hikes the land and navigates the water, allowing it to guide her next voyage. According to Bronwyn, depending on where you are, it's just better to get around on foot, bike, or kayak.

MORE STORIES BY BRONWYN

Nightlife in Maine

Nightlife In Maine

"Did you pack the sleeping bags?"

That's usually a question I ask when we're packing the Subaru to camping trip to the Bigelows or preparing to load the front hatch of kayak for a multi-day paddling trip down the coast.

But tonight there were no kayaks or cars. Our bike panniers were freighted for a short, six-mile pedal to the beach in anticipation of watching the "Super Moon" rise over the Atlantic. This "perigee" was supposed to be 14% bigger and 30% brighter than other full in 2012, so it wouldn't matter if there were skyscrapers and apartment buildings obstructing our view. On the beach though, the slight haze off the water and occasional gull are our only distractions. No telephone wires, cell phone towers, hum of traffic, or some competing light.

We parked our bikes at Beach Avenue - a small parking lot along Mile Stretch Road in Biddeford Pool. Aptly named, Biddeford Pool is a large tidal pool at the mouth of the Saco River. During the summertime and migratory seasons, birders flock to the pool and surrounding marshes to study the herons, swallows, hawks, eagles and other feathered beasts who inhabit the abundant tall grasses along the beaches and river. The water is usually bustling with activity: lobster men and women hauling in traps, clam diggers raking for meaty bi-valves, and kayakers paddling around Wood Island during high tide. At low tide, the pool empties, and dime-sized hermit crabs scuttle around in search for pockets of water and heaps of seaweed, under which they can hide.

We set-up on the far side of Fortune's Rock beach, careful to pick a spot beyond the rocky ledges that succumb to the surf during high tide. This is my favorite place to read especially during the winter, curled up on the beach in a sleeping bag like a cocooned caterpillar. Fortune's Rocks and the surrounding stretch of beach offers a rare mix of tubular waves sought after by surfers and



Editor's Notes:

Biddeford Pool is a large tidal pool where the Saco River meets the sea. It hosts lobstermen and vacationers alike, and is an excellent place to explore Maine's salt marshes. Many species of birds and wildlife call these lush, muddy banks their home, and the East Point Sanctuary is considered to be one of the premier birding spots in the Northeast.

Wood Island is the site of Maine's haunted Wood Island Lighthouse. Known for its characteristic alternating green and white flashes, this lighthouse has been a Maine landmark since the early 1800s. Reachable only by sea, tours are available with a reservation. Otherwise, the island and lighthouse are not open to the public.

Fortune's Rock Beach is only about 20 miles from downtown Portland, Maine's largest city. This sandy, 2-mile stretch of beach is a popular place to lounge or enjoy wave sports. You can go surfing, body surfing, skim boarding and surf kayaking.

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YOU HAVE 7 ITEMS IN YOUR PLAN



GRAFTON NOTCH STATE PARK [X]



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[X] ATV - KENNEBUNK



ATV - BANGOR



[X] HIKING - MT. DESERT

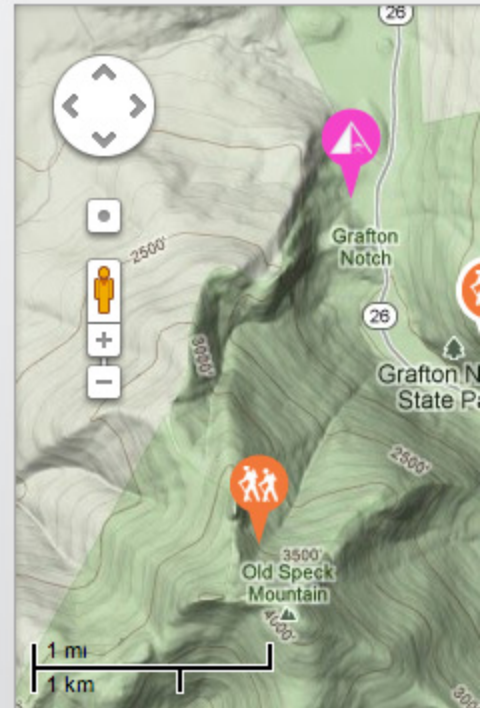


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