



Autumn on Cadillac Mountain
Photograph by Fred Hirschmann

An Acadian Afternoon

Your hike begins in the cool shade of the spruce-fir forest. Ribbons of sunlight drop through the canopy to needle-carpeted ground. The rat-a-tat of a pileated woodpecker shatters the hush of the woods, and a red squirrel darting along a tree trunk chitters as you pass by.

The trail rises; tree roots underfoot give way to lichen-spotted granite. Clumps of sheep laurel and low bush blueberry grow along the trail. Squat, gnarled pitch pines replace the straight spruce and fir below, and the scent of pine resin baking in the sun fills the air. After a rugged scramble over boulders, you pause in a shady spot to sip from your water bottle, noting the goose-foot-shaped leaves of striped maple glowing emerald in the sun. There are birch here, and aspen and oak; a much different forest than the one you started in. Could fire have once swept through here,

allowing faster-growing, sun-loving plants to dominate in place of shade-loving spruce? Or is some other process at work? What will become of these younger forests as time passes?

Stone steps appear ahead, a slope of loose rock scree magically rearranged. The trail, built over a hundred years ago by a summer resident, is but one of many contributions made by those who sought to preserve parts of the Acadian landscape for others to enjoy.

On a ranger-led walk earlier in the day, you learned to identify the trill of the white-throated sparrow, and now it pierces the air. Like so many other species, the white-throated sparrow visits only for the summer, spending its winters far beyond park borders in the south. As the trail climbs, the forest shrinks away to stunted weather-

beaten trees and barren granite. You step lightly and on stone, for life here is already tough for the plants that must survive in the severe climates of mountain tops, without a hiking boot crushing them. Three-toothed cinquefoil clusters behind rocks and sinks its roots into what little soil exists in the joints of granite bedrock. One careless kick of a rock could destroy decades of growth and crucial habitat for summit plants, including some rare subalpine species.

A panorama of shore and sea emerges, revealing the landmarks that define Acadia's coast—Sand Beach, Thunder Hole, and Otter Point. Across the bay, Schoodic Peninsula juts into the ocean. Visitors in the 1800s once looked out upon a similar scene, but instead of hearing the mutter of lobster boats, they saw the sails of hundreds of fishing sloops dotting the bay.

To the west, more mountains rise up. Their shapes suggest the southward movement of glaciers thousands of years ago pushing into the north ridges of the mountains. Scraping down their summits, they sculpted long, sloping south ridges.

At the summit, you are encircled by the mountainous and oceanic world of Acadia. In only one mile, you have hiked from sea level to the solitude of a mountain summit. Now you are faced with decisions: Explore farther on? Return to your starting point?

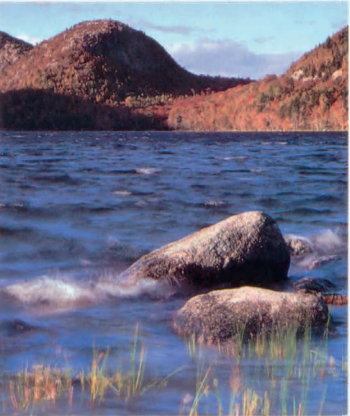
Beguiled by cool ocean breezes and the sun beating on your shoulders, maybe you simply sit back and contemplate the sky and sea, and the scudding clouds, and the fine afternoon that brought you here.

Shaping the Land

A variety of geologic processes have shaped Acadia National Park, providing tangible evidence of the region's ancient past.



Lawrence Parent



Sean Garry



Robert Thayer

(Far left) Ellsworth Schist, a product of the earliest forces at work in the creation of Mount Desert Island. (Middle) The Bubble Pond basin was scooped out by glacial action. (Left) Waves relentlessly pounding its rocky shore still shape the island.

(Right) Wabanaki birch bark carving: Beech Cliff (1922) was a popular hike and remains so today. Bass Harbor Head Light.

Wabanaki carving courtesy of the Abbe Museum

People of Mount Desert Island

“[The island] is very high, notched in places, so that there is the appearance to one at sea, as of seven or eight mountains extending along near each other. The summit of most of them is destitute of trees, as there are only rocks on them. The woods consist of pines, firs, and birches only. I name it Isle des Monts Deserts.”

Samuel de Champlain, 1604

The earliest indigenous people of Mount Desert Island were hunter-gatherers who plied the sea in dug-out canoes in pursuit of sea mammals and fish. Bits of animal bone, pottery shards, and stone tools, discarded in clam shell heaps, reveal clues about their daily lives. Some artifacts have been carbon dated to 5,000 years of age.

More recently, the Wabanaki inhabited the island year round, hunting, gathering, and trading with European fishermen and explorers.

Explorer Samuel de Champlain created the first reliable European record of Mount Desert Island in 1604. Though there were attempts to settle the island after his visit, 150 years of war between the French and British made it disputed territory unsafe for habitation until 1761, when English colonists established the first permanent settlement.

Islanders fished, farmed, quarried granite, and engaged in shipping. When the first visitors arrived in the mid-1800s, the tourist trade offered

a new source of income. Landscape painters of the Hudson River School inspired droves of weary city dwellers to seek out Mount Desert Island. Huge wooden hotels, and extravagant “cottages” built by wealthy summer residents, soon transformed quiet farming and fishing villages.

Amid the bustle and clamor of socials and lawn parties, there were those who still appreciated the natural beauty of the island. In 1901, Harvard president Charles Eliot formed the Hancock County Trustees

of Public Reservations to help preserve some of the beautiful spots on Mount Desert Island. The Trustees acquired about 5,000 acres in donated land that they presented to the Federal Government. President Woodrow Wilson signed Sieur de Monts National Monument into existence in 1916. As the park expanded with more land donations, an act of Congress redesignated it as a national park in 1919, making it the first to be established east of the Mississippi River.

A Diversity of Life

Sea meets land at Acadia, and life thrives from shore to summit. The arctic black crowberry grows next to the more temperate bunchberry. The songs of wood warblers fill the forest, and a green snake basks in the sun. Mammals, from the little brown bat to the larger white-tailed deer, also add to Acadia's diversity of life.



Sean Garry and designed by Robert Thayer

Tidepools
Pockets in the rocky shore trap pools of water as the tide recedes. Amazing creatures and plants survive in the inhospitable worlds between the tides.



Fred Hirschmann

Woodlands
Spruce-fir forest dominated the park until 1947, when fire burned 10,000 acres. In its wake grew sun-loving birch, aspen, and oak. The fire diversified both the woodlands and the wildlife the new growth attracted.



Lawrence Parent

Lakes
Glacially carved valleys cradle freshwater lakes in Acadia's interior. Here waterfowl, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates thrive, and humans may find reflection.



Sean Garry

Mountains
The mountains, not nearly as barren as Samuel de Champlain once described, are home to woodlands and numerous plant species. On some precipitous cliff faces, peregrine falcons nest.

Visiting Acadia

Getting Here

By Automobile: Follow Maine 3 to Mount Desert Island. Schoodic Peninsula can be reached by Maine 186.
By Air: Airlines serve the Hancock County Airport, located 10 miles from the park, and Bangor International Airport, 45 miles from the park. Shuttles link airports with Mount Desert Island.
By Bus: Concord Trailways and Vermont Transit provide service between Logan Airport (Boston) and Bangor. Shuttles link buslines with Mount Desert Island.
By Ferry: Bay Ferries offers car and passenger service between Bar Harbor and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, June-October. Isle au Haut is accessible by ferry from Stonington, Maine.

Exploring Acadia

Island Explorer Shuttles Parking is limited in Acadia National Park. During the summer, Island Explorer shuttles connect lodging and campgrounds with villages, the park, and ferries. Your park entrance fees support the Island Explorer, which is fare-free.

Park Entrance Passes Your entrance fees support many park programs. Passes may be purchased at the Halls Cove Visitor Center, park headquarters, park campgrounds, and the entrance station located one-half mile north of Sand Beach.

Visitor Center Begin your visit at the Halls Cove Visitor Center on Maine 3.

Information, a captioned audiovisual program, publications, and activity schedules are available. In the winter, information is located at park headquarters on Maine 233, west of Bar Harbor.

Scenic Driving The 20-mile Park Loop Road connects Acadia's lakes, mountains, and seashore. Cadillac Mountain Road offers panoramic views of the coast and island-studded bays. Federal law requires wearing seatbelts.

Ranger-led Programs Rangers lead programs along the shore, atop mountains, into the forest, and on boat cruises, interpreting Acadia's wildlife, history, plants, geology, and more. Ask about schedules.

Trails Acadia's many historic trails, from lowland paths to mountain routes, suit the casual walker or the avid hiker. Beware of loose stones and poison ivy, stay on trails, wear hiking shoes, and do not hike alone. Trails are for day hiking only; there is no backcountry camping in Acadia.

Carriage Roads Acadia's 44 miles of historic carriage roads are one of the finest examples of broken-stone roads left in America. When bicycling, remember to yield to all carriage road users.

Swimming Echo Lake Beach and Sand Beach are lifeguarded in the summer. The ocean is cold! Many lakes supply

public drinking water and are closed to swimming and wading.

Bicycling The park has 44 miles of carriage roads and 27 miles of paved roads. Bicycles are prohibited off-road or on hiking trails.

Winter Visits Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are popular when conditions permit. Winter hiking can be treacherous due to icy conditions.

Accommodations There are two park campgrounds: Blackwoods is open all year (reservations required May-October). Seawall is open late May-September (first-come, first-served). Prevent mid-

night marauders from ruining your camping experience: Do not feed raccoons! Store and dispose of food correctly. Private campgrounds and lodging are available in nearby towns.

Accessibility A guidebook on accessible services and facilities is available at all information centers and park campgrounds. Ask about closed-captioned and audio description programs. Accessible ranger-led programs are also available; ask about schedules.

Acadia's Seasons Prepare for changeable weather conditions. Summer high temperatures average 70-80°F. Fog is

common. Spring and fall highs are 50-60°F. Winter lasts from November to April. Temperatures range from below 0°F to 30°F. Snowfall averages 60 inches.

For Your Safety Beware slick rocks on trails or on the shore. Waves can knock you down and sweep you out to sea.

Regulations Fires and camping are permitted only in designated sites. Firearms are prohibited in the park unless cased, broken down, or otherwise packed against use. Pets must be attended and leashed at all times.

To protect the scenic, historic, cultural, and scientific values of the park, Leave

No Trace! Removing plants, animals, rocks, and other natural or historic features in the park is prohibited. Observe wildlife at a distance. Feeding wildlife is prohibited. Carry out anything you've carried in. Stay on trails; hike and rest on durable surfaces, such as rock, when possible.

More Information Acadia National Park P.O. Box 177 Bar Harbor, ME 04609-0177 207-288-3338 (Voice/TDD) www.nps.gov/acad

Visit the National Park Service website at www.nps.gov

©GPO: 2001-472-470/0401 Printed on recycled paper

Acadia National Park



Isle au Haut



Schoodic Peninsula



Mount Desert Island

