

Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park –
Then and Now

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About Bar Harbor:

- Bar Harbor is the largest town located on Mount Desert Island.
- The entrance to Acadia National Park is less than one mile from downtown Bar Harbor and part of the park is in Bar Harbor proper.
- Mount Desert Island is one of the largest islands on the U.S. Atlantic seaboard, measuring 28 miles across east to west, with a total area of 108 square miles.
- Bar Harbor has a year-round population of 5,235 (2010 census).
- The summer season is defined by warm days and cool evenings with an average daily high temperature above 66°F.
- Three Mount Desert Island towns, Bar Harbor, Tremont and Mount Desert, have passed lighting ordinances to protect the quality of the night skies in the region.
- Serviced by a local airport, the Hancock County-Bar Harbor Airport, located just 12 miles from the village, and by Bangor International Airport only 50 miles away.
- More than 125 cruise ships arrive in Bar Harbor each year.

By the Numbers:

- More than 5,316,000 lobsters are eaten in Bar Harbor every year.
- Acadia National Park protects more than 50,000 acres.
- More than 127 miles of hiking trails.
- 27-mile scenic Park Loop Road.
- 45 miles of carriage roads.

History:

- Originally (and aptly) named Eden, it was renamed Bar Harbor in 1918 in reference to the sand bar that connects Bar Island to Mount Desert Island.
- Stunning vistas of Bar Harbor inspired famed artists Thomas Cole and Frederic Church.
- Inspired by the natural beauty, visitors soon became summer residents, known as “rusticators.”
- Notable and influential rusticators included the Astors, Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, Carnegies, and Morgans.
- The Great Fire of 1947 destroyed nearly half the eastern side of Mount Desert Island, including 67 of 222 palatial summer houses. Five historic grand hotels were destroyed, in addition to 170 of 667 year-round homes. More than 10,000 acres of Acadia National Park were destroyed. Fortunately, the town’s business district was spared, including Mount Desert Street.
- Bostonian George B. Dorr worked with Harvard president Charles W. Elliot to create a national park on Mount Desert Island – later named Acadia National Park.
- John D. Rockefeller, Jr. is responsible for the 45 miles of carriage roads in the park.

Geography:

- At 1,532 feet, Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park is the highest coastal point on the east coast of the United States.
- Cadillac Mountain is the first place to see the sun rise in the continental U.S. from October 7 to March 6.
- Somes Sound is the only fjord in the northeastern U.S.

Accolades:

- Newsmax’s 50 Best Small Towns in America, Newsmax, 2016
- 2016 Top-Rated US & Canada Cruise Destination, Cruise Critic, 2016
- Top 10 Islands—United States, Trip Advisor, 2016
- Best National Park for Kids, USAToday 10 Best, 2016
- The Best National Parks to Visit in Winter, Travel + Leisure, 2016
- 16 National Parks to Visit in the Winter Instead of the Summer, The Active Times, 2016
- The 10 Best Fall Hiking Trails in the U.S., Condé Nast Traveler, 2016
- National Parks Perfect for Stargazing, Travel + Leisure, 2016
- New England’s Best Hikes, Lonely Planet, 2016
- Best Small Town Celebrations for Independence Day, The Active Times, 2016
- The Top 20 Honeymoon Destinations According to Pinterest, Harper’s Bazaar, 2016
- The Best National Parks for Outdoor Weddings, Brides, 2016

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