

THE BEST OF NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

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You've done the Florida sun, the European tour, the Alaskan cruise, and the all-inclusive Caribbean resort, but what you really want is something different. You want to experience something natural and untamed, to relax and rejuvenate without resorting to laziness. You want to create your own vacation memories, not reenact someone else's itinerary. You yearn for a place unlike any other, somewhere that hasn't been sanitized and packaged for official tourist consumption. Well, now you've found it: Newfoundland and Labrador, the Far East of the Western world.

Sightseeing **St. John's**, Newfoundland and Labrador's principal metropolis, is a tapestry of historic stone buildings, colorful homes clinging to steep streets, and bustling pubs filled with the sounds of traditional music. Beyond the capital, the rest of the province beckons: the whales and puffins of **Witless Bay** on the **Avalon Peninsula**, the icebergs of **Twillingate**; the magnificent fjords of **Gros Morne National Park**, the Viking heritage of **L'Anse aux Meadows**, and the vast wilderness of **Labrador**.

Eating & Drinking Seafood dominates menus across Newfoundland and Labrador. Plan on going beyond the ordinary and order delicacies such as cod tongues with scrunchions (salted cubes of pork fat) to fully immerse yourself in the local dining scene. Although St. John's has the main concentration of upscale restaurants, pleasant surprises await when you least expect them—the gourmet picnics offered at the **Ferryland** lighthouse, the creative presentations of caribou at the Norseman Restaurant on the **Northern Peninsula**, or something as simple as freshly baked bread smothered in bakeapple jam at a Labrador bed-and-breakfast.

Relaxation The inhabitants of this isolated locale are as real as it gets. “Newfies” are unpretentious, thoughtful, and witty. They'll charm you with their accents and their generous spirit. Though their lifestyle is neither opulent nor lavish, they will never hesitate to help a person in need.

Nature Newfoundland and Labrador's natural beauty is remarkable. There is a seemingly endless coastline, vast interior barrenlands, and mountain vistas of stunning beauty. You'll find places like the Labrador Straits, where sky meets horizon in blazing color, and the vast waterways

of **Terra Nova National Park**, where whales and kayakers intermingle. There are rivers where salmon launch themselves against the current, and highways where traffic slows for herds of caribou. As any local will tell you, this is the most blessedly cursed union of land, sea, air, and sky on creation. Come here once, and you'll have a perpetual longing to return.

THE best TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

- **Walk the streets of downtown St. John's:** St. John's is one of the most interesting and visually exciting cities I've ever been to. The downtown core is relatively compact, and many of the top sights can be found within a short walk of the harbor. See chapter 4.
- **Stand on top of Signal Hill:** You literally have a city at your feet when you stand at the base of Cabot Tower. (Walk around the tower to the far side from the parking lot, and you'll be gazing down at the broad expanse of the Atlantic Ocean.) It's one of those must-see pilgrimages for any visitor to the capital city, and even for a good many local residents. See chapter 4, p. 81.
- **Watch the sun come up at Cape Spear:** On this, the most easterly point in North America, a spectacular sunrise, swirling surf, and picturesque lighthouse make Cape Spear the perfect location for an unforgettable marriage proposal. Find your inner romantic; see chapter 4, p. 83.
- **Dance the night away on George Street:** With the most pubs per capita in North America, the fun continues long after the sun has set in St. John's. There's something for everyone on George Street (rap, jazz, traditional, contemporary, and more). Find your favorite nighttime hot spot in "St. John's After Dark," in chapter 4.
- **Get sprayed by the Spout:** This natural geyser shoots saltwater more than 60m (197 ft.) into the air. You'll be wet, cold, and tired by the time you get there . . . and you won't even notice. You'll be too awestruck by every step along the spectacular East Coast Trail. For directions, see chapter 5, p. 115.
- **Experience an active archaeological dig at the Colony of Avalon:** Walk the oldest cobblestone street in North America and see artifacts from a 16th-century settlement. You'll learn about ancient battles for property ownership and skirmishes with marauding privateers. See chapter 5, p. 102.
- **Enjoy an outdoor lunch at Ferryland:** Lighthouse Picnics will fill a basket full of goodies—and even provide a blanket—to make your lunch on the grassy headland of this historic community memorable. See chapter 5, p. 100.
- **Enjoy a bird's-eye view of Bird Rock:** After a short walk across an open field, you'll feel like you've reached the end of the world on that cliff overlooking Bird Rock at **Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve**. Imagine gazing into the eyes of thousands of squawking gannets nearly within arm's reach! See chapter 5, p. 107.
- **Dig into history at Bell Island:** It's just a 30-minute boat ride from Portugal Cove, but it's a giant step back in time when you explore the abandoned iron-ore mines of Bell Island. Or step back even further, with a scuba-diving expedition to the wreckage of sunken ships that surround the island's perimeter. Find out how you can organize your own Bell Island adventure in chapter 5, p. 114.
- **Get carried away by Rising Tide:** Here's professional theater in both indoor and outdoor venues, in the heart of Newfoundland's most visually historical community, Trinity. Whether it's the comedic characters of the New Founde Lande Trinity

Pageant or the haunting tragedy of a more serious dramatic production, you're sure to be impressed by the Rising Tide theater company. For details, see chapter 6, p. 124.

- **Light up your day with a trip to the Cape Bonavista Lighthouse:** This step back in time is informative, introspective, and breathtakingly beautiful. Inside, you'll be greeted by costumed interpreters and a realistic portrayal of life as it once was for the lighthouse keeper and his family. Outside, you'll be equally enraptured by the rocky coastline and flowing seascape. See chapter 6, p. 127.
- **Chart a course for the North Atlantic Aviation Museum:** At the town of Gander, experience local aviation history, as depicted through storyboards, scale model displays, and restored aircraft. And if you've ever dreamed of becoming a pilot, you can move a step closer to that dream when you park yourself in the cockpit of a DC-38. See chapter 7, p. 149.
- **Cruise the South Coast:** Visit the most isolated communities on the island portion of the province. These gems of outpost perfection are accessible only by ferry. They might not have pavement, but they're also free of traffic jams and road rage. A ferry trip along the South Coast is the best way to get up close and personal with the best (people) and worst (isolation) of rural Newfoundland. See chapter 7, p. 159.
- **Visit the province's last pocket of French settlement:** The **Port au Port Peninsula** is the only place in the province where French displaces English as the native language. *Ici, on parle Français*. Language, however, is just one part of a larger cultural dynamic. Here, you'll find a more overt Roman Catholic heritage and a genuinely French *joie de vivre*—unique in a society of primarily English and Irish descent. See chapter 8, p. 166.
- **Cruise the fjords of Gros Morne:** A tour boat excursion across **Western Brook Pond** in Gros Morne National Park will be one of the highlights of your trip to Newfoundland and Labrador. You pass countless waterfalls and towering peaks, and feel at peace with nature. See chapter 8, p. 183.
- **Set sail on a Viking adventure:** Take your place at the oar onboard a replica Viking *knarr* with Viking Boat Tours. It's a full-fledged Viking-style oceangoing adventure: You can even dress in traditional garb for a more authentic experience. Still, I doubt the Vikings would have approved—only good, clean fun is allowed on this ship. For information on how to book your Nordic adventure, see chapter 8, p. 195.
- **Climb the lighthouse at Point Amour:** The rewards are well worth the effort. You'll get a spectacular view (including a bird's-eye view of some of the oldest fossils found in North America) and learn quite a bit about naval history and shipwrecks. Back at ground level, you can hike the HMS *Raleigh* Trail when you're done. See chapter 9, p. 204.

THE best SPOTS FOR OBSERVING WILDLIFE & NATURE

- **The Fluvarium:** This interesting facility within St. John's city limits is easily accessible to those using public transport and very convenient to campers next door in Pippy Park. The Fluvarium offers a firsthand look at the underwater world of brook trout and other creatures that inhabit Newfoundland's ponds and rivers. See chapter 4, p. 85.

- **Route 10, The Irish Loop:** Head south of St. John's, and you'll find a number of the province's best nature attractions within close proximity. Out at **Witless Bay Ecological Reserve**, seabirds abound, numbering more than 2.5 million, including more than 500,000 Atlantic puffins. The waters are also full of playful humpback whales. The whales actually heave their massive bodies out of the water and snare mouthfuls of food during their descent. The reserve is accessible by boat tour. Meanwhile, back on land, a herd of caribou can often be seen from the highway near Trepassey, and if you're really lucky, you may be able to watch the humpbacks feeding off the beach at St. Vincent's. See chapter 5, p. 98.
- **Visit with local wildlife at Salmonier Nature Park:** At this home for wounded and orphaned animals, you'll see moose, fox, hare, lynx, and more in their natural environment (or almost natural—the holding areas are securely fenced enclosures). The Nature Park is a pleasant walk and education expedition, combined with a rare opportunity to view reclusive animals. Adding to the charm, no admission is charged. See chapter 5, p. 105.
- **Watch salmon return to their spawning grounds at the Salmonid Interpretation Centre:** Here, you'll get both a surface and underwater view of these homeward-bound fish as they make their annual against-the-current pilgrimage. See chapter 7, p. 157.
- **White-water raft with Rafting Newfoundland:** Your exhilarating ride through breathtaking scenery just might include passing a black bear or moose. You'll see the province in a way not possible from the highway. See chapter 7, p. 157.
- **Twillingate:** This is the place to be if you're thrilled by the sight of towering icebergs and gracious whales. Icebergs float by from May through July. (They seem to linger a bit longer in the bay near Twillingate than they do elsewhere around the province.) Humpback whales are in abundance from June through September. See chapter 7, p. 151.
- **Northern Peninsula:** Anyone looking for a moose is bound to spot one here. This remote and rugged part of northwestern Newfoundland is home to many of the province's 130,000 big, brown, beautiful creatures. You'll often see them on or along the highway at dusk or dawn, especially during the fall. See chapter 8, p. 185.
- **Sail amid floating glacial castles with Northland Discovery Boat Tours:** You'll marvel at the cracks and colors in 10,000-year-old icebergs while traveling alongside playful dolphins, whales, and seabirds in their natural environment. To learn how you can get a taste of Northland Discovery's unique eco-tourism adventure (not to mention the purest water on Earth), see chapter 8, p. 193.
- **Tablelands:** Students of geology already know that there's no better place to be than the island of Newfoundland, commonly known as the Rock. And there's no more spectacular example of the world's natural geological forces than this UNESCO World Heritage Site, where tremendous forces deep below the Earth's crust pushed upward 470 million years ago. See chapter 8, p. 182.
- **Gros Morne Adventures:** Guided sea kayaking tours through the sheltered waters of Bonne Bay give you a sea-level view of bald eagles, terns, and other wildlife. You'll be gliding through one of the most scenic areas of the province: Mountains, fjords, and glacial deposits are just a few of the features you'll encounter along your paddling adventure. See chapter 8, p. 185.

- Pinware River Provincial Park:** Most of the Labrador Straits area is open, barren land with just a few stands of tuckamore for color. Not here. In Pinware Park, you'll find a verdant spruce carpet in a sheltered valley, as well as abundant freshwater fish and extreme kayaking conditions (for experts only!). To learn more about the park, see chapter 9, p. 205.

THE best SCENIC DRIVES

- Cape Spear Road:** Just a 15-minute drive south of St. John's, Cape Spear is the most easterly point in North America, a National Historic Site, and site of the Cape Spear Lighthouse. If you're enjoying the drive, continue a little farther south toward the scenic fishing village of Petty Harbour. It won't take you more than an hour to drive the complete circle from St. John's to Cape Spear–Petty Harbour–Goulds–Kilbride and back to St. John's. See chapter 4, p. 83.
- Middle Cove to Pouch Cove:** In the opposite direction from Cape Spear and Petty Harbour are the close-knit communities of Logy Bay–Middle Cove–Outer Cove, Torbay, Flat Rock, and Pouch Cove (pronounced “pooch cove”; follow rtes. 30 and 20). There's an interesting contrast along the drive: Nestled in between the farmland and obviously rural lifestyle are some of the most prestigious properties on the island, evidence of the growing prosperity in this part of the province. See chapter 4, p. 85.
- Irish Loop:** This loop is a 4-hour round-trip drive through the heart of Newfoundland's Irish heritage and caribou country. Along the way, you'll see beautiful coastal communities beside a panorama of rugged shore and outpost loveliness. Follow Route 10 south of St. John's. If you stay on the same route (the name changes to Rte. 90 about halfway), you'll be carried back to the capital city. See chapter 5, p. 98.
- Baccalieu Trail:** The tiny outpost communities that line the shores of this finger of the Avalon Peninsula between Trinity and Conception bays are simply beautiful. Routes 80 and 70 will take you to inviting communities such as Heart's Delight,

RV There Yet?

Newfoundland by RV? No, I haven't done it, but a lot of people do, and they report that it's a fine place to bring a rolling home. The island's main road, the Trans-Canada Highway, is in surprisingly good condition. So long as you remember to gas up and buy supplies now and then, it'll work; there are plenty of friendly campgrounds spaced out across the island with spaces and hookups for campers (many with Wi-Fi access), plus attractive coves, villages, and parks all along the route. There also seem to be a number

of spots where you can park overnight for free (without services, obviously). One caution: If you are bringing the camper, don't plan to negotiate it around the streets of St. John's, which is historic, quaint, and a city . . . thus crammed with narrow streets and tight turns. Instead, camp in lovely **Pippy Park** (p. 73) a few miles northwest of town, then call a taxi, catch a ride with a friend, or deploy your “toad”: RV-speak for the passenger car you've “towed” behind you.

Heart's Content, and Harbour Grace. But remember to get off the highway and drive right into the villages in order to truly enjoy the beauty. See chapter 5, p. 108.

- **Route 230 to Bonavista:** Beautiful in any season, this stunning stretch of highway is especially breathtaking when cloaked in early fall foliage. You'll find yourself wanting to pull over at every bend in the road so you can really appreciate the incredible views. The shining stars of the journey are the towns of Trinity and Bonavista, and the sweeping ocean panorama seen from the end of the road at Cape Bonavista. See chapter 6.
- **The foot of the Heritage Run:** If you look at the Burin Peninsula on a map, you'll notice it resembles a leg with a foot on the end. The long "leg" of the Heritage Run has some memorable moments, though for the main, it doesn't qualify as a scenic drive. But the loop journey from the ankle to the toe and back (rtes. 222, 220, and 213) is a different story. Here, you'll follow a coastal trail with an obvious maritime theme. Highlights of the trip are the lobster pots, fishing boats, and immaculate wharf facilities you'll spot along the side of the road. See chapter 6.
- **Kittiwake Coast:** It's a long drive from Gambo through the assorted towns and villages along the north coast (rtes. 320–330) before heading back to the Trans-Canada Highway at Gander, but it's so worth the effort. En route are picture-perfect picnic spots, a long sandy beach (rare in this part of the world), and the community once known as the "Venice of Newfoundland." See chapter 7.
- **Route 430 up the Northern Peninsula:** At Deer Lake, Route 430 spurs north along the western side of the northern peninsula. You'll pass Gros Morne National Park, Port au Choix National Historic Site, L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site, and the town of St. Anthony, where you're likely to see an iceberg or two. In between all the official highlights, the road passes through some handsomely rugged and remote countryside. See chapter 8.
- **Labrador Coastal Drive:** Route 510 takes you from the ferry at Blanc Sablon, Quebec, to the captivating outport of Red Bay, Labrador. It's a paved road (one of the few in Labrador, so take advantage of it), which gives you a chance to tour the interesting communities and many historical attractions found on the Labrador Straits. Highlights include sunken Spanish galleons, a 7,500-year-old burial mound, and Atlantic Canada's tallest lighthouse. See chapter 9.

THE most picturesque VILLAGES

- **Quidi Vidi (St. John's):** Pronounced "kiddee viddee," this historical fishing village has managed to stop time in its tracks. You're not more than a 5-minute drive from the traffic of downtown St. John's, yet Quidi Vidi has one of the oldest cottages in North America, horses grazing on the cliffs overlooking the peaceful lake, and timeless fishing sheds snuggling up to the granite cliffs that guard its sheltered harbor. See chapter 4, p. 83.
- **Petty Harbour (St. John's):** Just 15 minutes south of St. John's, this peaceful and quaint fishing village has been the backdrop for a number of films. With its aging fishing sheds, wooden slipways, and cliff-hugging houses tucked within a protective hillside embrace, its attraction as a movie set is readily apparent. It's amazing to find such a picturesque and well-preserved piece of traditional Newfoundland culture just minutes from the capital city. See chapter 4, p. 84.

Getting to Know Salvage

On the western edge of the Eastern Region, following Route 310 east of Glovertown, is one of the most picturesque (and most photographed!) fishing communities in the province. Salvage (pronounced “sal-vage”) is a

visual treat of stages, wharves, sheds, and slipways nestled in and around a granite shore. This, the never-ending ocean serenade, and houses built in the unlikelyst of places, make Salvage an unforgettable destination.

- **Ferryland (Avalon Peninsula):** Aside from the unique lure of its ongoing archaeological dig (impressive as that is), the town of Ferryland is a strikingly attractive community. It flows down from the hills in graceful descent to sea level, layers of green grass and rocky knolls sprinkled amid stubborn settlement. On the small peninsula extending out from Ferryland Harbour is a lighthouse, its blinking eye a haunting reminder of the tragedy that can befall unwary sailors. To plan your visit to Ferryland, see chapter 5, p. 100.
- **Brigus (Avalon Peninsula):** You'll see lots of beautiful flowers and overhanging trees lining the narrow streets that lead to the harbor of this historic fishing village, and an abundance of heritage-style homes that give the place a real step-back-in-time feel. If you're looking to make the modern world go away for a while, Brigus is the perfect retreat. See chapter 5, p. 108.
- **Dildo (Avalon Peninsula):** If the name alone isn't enough to spark your curiosity, you might be attracted by this historical fishing village's proud seafaring history. And then there's its aesthetic beauty: It was named one of Canada's prettiest towns, and you're sure to agree when looking at the wonderful view of Trinity Bay. Green space and simple wooden fences add to Dildo's rustic charm. See chapter 5, p. 111.
- **Trinity (Eastern Region):** Time seems to have stood still for this quaint fishing village that has preserved many of its 19th-century buildings. Or, if it hasn't stood still, there's certainly a concerted community effort to turn back the clock. If you climb the hill from Courthouse Road behind the Royal Bank just before sunset, you'll get one of the most beautiful views available anywhere. See chapter 6, p. 121.
- **Twillingate (Central Region):** Here is a community perfectly positioned for optimum iceberg viewing. With such impressive floating monoliths frequenting the shore every spring and early summer, you'll be forgiven if your attention wanders from the man-made beauty in and around the town. But rest assured, Twillingate is indeed a complementary composition of raw landscape and human construction. You'll find it at the northern end of Route 340. See chapter 7, p. 151.
- **Gaultois (Central Region):** At the opposite end of the compass from Twillingate is an isolated outport village, accessible only by ferry. It has no paved roads and very limited services, but that doesn't put Gaultois at a disadvantage. Majestic cliffs ring the little community, and wooden boardwalks serve as the local land highway (the real highway is the ocean). You'll have to work to find it, as it's hidden from view on a narrow strip of land at the head of a fjord. See chapter 7, p. 160.
- **Port aux Basques (Western Newfoundland):** An often underappreciated community, Port aux Basques is more than a relay station for the Newfoundland–Nova Scotia ferry. It has both traditional architectural beauty and an impressive blasted-rock harbor entrance. It takes on a romantic ambience in the twilight

hours, thanks to the guide lights used to illuminate the harbor. See chapter 8, p. 164.

- Battle Harbour (Labrador):** Accessible only by boat, this one-time capital of Labrador was abandoned in the 1960s. Now restored, century-old buildings and a simple beauty create a haunting, yet memorable, destination. Escape the hustle and bustle of the modern world, whether for a day trip or overnight stay, in the nostalgic Battle Harbour Inn. See chapter 9, p. 208.

THE best HIKES & WALKING TOURS

- St. John's Haunted Hike (St. John's):** Looking for something different? Try this after-dark stroll through downtown St. John's with the Reverend Thomas Wyckham Jarvis, Esquire. He'll take you on a rather eerie walk through some of the oldest graveyards in the city and add quite a bit of theatrics along the way to keep your adrenaline pumping. See chapter 4, p. 90.
- Signal Hill-Battery Trail (St. John's):** Not for the faint of heart! This walk starts at a pinnacle height, towering over the capital city, and follows a thigh-burning descent along a dizzying path less than 3m (9¾ ft.) from the edge of a 61m (200-ft.) drop to the Atlantic Ocean. Those brave enough to attempt it are rewarded with the most spectacular scenery in the city. See chapter 4, p. 82.
- East Coast Trail (Avalon Peninsula):** This 254km (158-mile) route is one of North America's classic hiking trails. From north of St. John's, it leads south along the beautiful coastline of the Avalon Peninsula. You can see whales and seabirds close to shore, and parts of the trail are easy enough for the beginner. It's divided into sections, so you can do as much or as little as you like, tailoring your hike(s) to your time frame and fitness level. See chapter 5, p. 115.
- British Harbour Trail (Eastern Region):** An old cart road leads to an abandoned outport village and then follows a starkly beautiful stretch of rocky coast to a second village. See chapter 6, p. 125.
- Terra Nova National Park (Eastern Region):** Much of this park's focus is on the water, but a number of interesting hikes lace the dense mainland forest. A favorite is the **Coastal Trail**, linking the main campground and visitor center. See chapter 6, p. 142.



Passing Time with the National Park Pass

Here's a great tip if you're planning to be in the province awhile and visit its national parks and national historic sites: You can now buy a **Parks Canada Discovery Pass ★★** for C\$68 per adult or C\$136 per family, plus tax. This pass gains you access to national parks, national marine conservation areas, and national historic sites across Canada for 1

full year. Passes for National Historic Sites only are available for approximately 25% less.

Buy the pass right at the entrance of the first national park or historic site you visit. For more info, see the "Parks Canada National Passes" section of the Parks Canada website at www.pc.gc.ca.

- Gros Morne National Park (Western Newfoundland):** It's impossible to select one particular trail from this park as the best; they're all very different, and you can choose one that meets your own abilities or interests. If you're an experienced hiker and enjoy the challenges of a difficult climb, you'll find that the **Gros Morne Mountain Trail** offers the most spectacular rewards. See chapter 8, p. 173.
- Port au Choix National Historic Site (Western Newfoundland):** Two connected hiking trails, each with its own attributes, crisscross this historically important site halfway up the northern peninsula. The **Phillip's Garden Coastal Trail** stands out for the opportunity of watching archaeologists at work. See chapter 8, p. 187.
- HMS Raleigh Trail (Labrador):** On this coastal hike at Point Amour, you can marvel at 500-million-year-old fossils, search out a shipwreck, photograph a waterfall, and pick mouthwatering berries, all without having to go too far off the beaten track. The trail begins at Atlantic Canada's tallest lighthouse. See chapter 9, p. 205.

THE best FAMILY ACTIVITIES

- Johnson Geo Centre (St. John's):** This underground geological display is fun for the entire family. Adults will appreciate the educational interpretive program, while teenagers will be impressed by the oversize exhibits (and cool audiovisual presentation with simulated rain and volcanic eruptions). Younger children will entertain themselves just squirting water at the exposed rock wall and amusing themselves in the KIDZone. See chapter 4, p. 81.
- Fluvarium (St. John's):** This first-class interpretation facility provides visitors the opportunity to go beneath the surface to see trout and underwater species (the building boasts a glass-walled viewing area). Try to time your visit for the day's scheduled feeding. See chapter 4, p. 85.
- Avondale Railway Station Museum (Avalon Peninsula):** For more than a century, trains played a vital role in moving people and goods across Newfoundland. You can see just how important they were at the Avondale Railway Station Museum, the province's oldest railway station. There are decommissioned cars on display, and during the summer, children can go for a ride on one of the museum's small rail cars. See chapter 5, p. 111.
- Stan Cook Sea Kayak Adventures (Avalon Peninsula):** Kayaking is fun for the young and the young-at-heart. Stan Cook's company has specially designed kayaks so children too young to paddle on their own can ride with Mom or Dad. And, for beginners, there's expert on-shore instruction provided prior to heading out onto the water. See chapter 5, p. 116.
- Terra Nova Resort (Eastern Region):** This resort offers golfing, nature hikes, mini-golf, tennis, basketball, swimming, a children's program, and more. See chapter 6, p. 137.
- Frenchman's Cove Provincial Park (Eastern Region):** This Burin Peninsula park offers a pebble beach, playground, and freshwater pond for outdoor swimming. Don't worry, the adults won't find themselves at loose ends—they can walk the fairways of a 9-hole golf course. See chapter 6, p. 134.
- Terra Nova National Park:** Terra Nova gets high marks for its family activities. The park has an excellent interpretive program, nice campgrounds, a sandy beach for watersports and swimming, an evening interpretive program, great hands-on

displays at the visitor center, easy walking trails, and boat tours of Newman Sound. See chapter 6, p. 136.

- **Splash-n-Putt Resort (Eastern Region):** The largest water park in the province, with a 91m-long (299-ft.) waterslide, comes complete with bumper cars, go-karts, and mini-golf. See chapter 6, p. 143.
- **Marble Mountain Resort (Western Newfoundland):** Winter fun for the entire family, the 35 named runs have something for everyone; snowboarders gravitate to the half-pipe and terrain park. For the younger set, there's certified ski and snowboard instruction and day care, which means parents and children get to enjoy the resort on their own terms. See chapter 8, p. 170.
- **Newfoundland Insectarium (Western Newfoundland):** What kid doesn't like bugs or butterflies? Kids have a great time here, watching honeybees buzz about, stretching out their hands to catch a butterfly, getting some bug-related souvenirs to take home, and having an ice cream when they're finished. See chapter 8, p. 172.
- **Norstead (Western Newfoundland):** This reenactment village depicts the everyday life of Norsemen—and women—from A.D. 1000. Norstead's wonderful Discovery Program for kids offers a hands-on opportunity to participate in the various activities that would have been carried on in the settlement. Even the teens will be shocked out of their chronic boredom by the clanging swords and hand-to-hand combat of the mock battles. See chapter 8, p. 195.

THE best PLACES TO DISCOVER LOCAL HISTORY & CULTURE

- **The Rooms (St. John's):** Constructed to resemble “fishing rooms,” where families would process their catch, this imposing complex combines the provincial museum, art gallery, and archives. Far from your typical stuffy museum, it features a distinct contemporary ambience, as the story of the province's human and natural history unfolds while you move from room to room. See chapter 4, p. 81.
- **Signal Hill (St. John's):** Just a short drive from downtown, this National Historic Site offers the best view of St. John's and the harbor. It was here that Guglielmo Marconi received the first wireless transatlantic signal, using a kite to catch the faint transmission from Poldhu, England. For the full effect, time your visit to take in the Signal Hill Military Tattoo. See chapter 4, p. 82.
- **Basilica of St. John the Baptist (St. John's):** For years the largest and most imposing structure on the St. John's skyline, the Basilica was one of the few buildings to survive the Great Fires that devastated the capital city during the early part of the

Exploring St. John's Art Galleries

Artists are acknowledged mediums for the ideas and attitudes of their generation's culture. You can see (and buy) the work of some of the most talented

artists in the province through one of several St. John's art galleries: Christina Parker, Emma Butler, and Lane. See chapter 4, p. 92.

20th century. A highlight of your visit will be a viewing of the Veiled Virgin statue. See chapter 4, p. 79.

- **Quidi Vidi Battery (St. John's):** In the early battles for control of the colony of St. John's, heavy fortifications were constructed at strategic locations throughout the city. This quiet hill overlooking Quidi Vidi Harbour was one of them. Today, costumed interpreters explain the purpose of the installation and the people who resided there. See chapter 4, p. 83.
- **Colony of Avalon (Avalon Peninsula):** Make your first stop at this independently run national historic site, south of St. John's, the Interpretation Centre. From this point, it's a short stroll through the village of Ferryland to the dig site, where archaeologists are continuing to uncover remnants of the first successful planned colony in Newfoundland. See chapter 5, p. 102.
- **Hawthorne Cottage National Historic Site (Avalon Peninsula):** The former home of famous Arctic explorer Captain Bob Bartlett includes intriguing insights into the life and times of the man and his family, as well as the struggles he faced on his expeditions. See chapter 5, p. 112.
- **Dildo & Area Interpretation Centre (Avalon Peninsula):** This is a fascinating facility if you're interested in the workings of a fish hatchery and want to learn more about the way of life for Newfoundlanders of the not-so-distant past, as well as the native peoples who once inhabited the region. Plus, it comes with a replica of a giant squid that was caught in the area! See chapter 5, p. 111.
- **Trinity Historical Properties (Eastern Region):** While the entire community of Trinity is a living museum, with residents embracing their past as the route to future prosperity, a few buildings are open as tourist attractions. These include the Lester-Garland Premises, Hiscock House, Trinity Museum, Court House, and Green Family Forge. See chapter 6, p. 121.
- **Ryan Premises National Historic Site (Eastern Region):** This cluster of 19th-century harborfront buildings is a restoration of the merchant premises that served as the hub of a once-thriving fishing community. The Interpretive Centre has an excellent display about changes that have affected the province's fishery. Also check out the replica in the harbor of the *Matthew*, the three-masted 15th-century vessel sailed by John Cabot to Newfoundland in 1497. See chapter 6, p. 128.
- **Burin Heritage Museum (Eastern Region):** The communities of Grand Bank and Fortune are among the closest in the world to the infamous fishing grounds of the Grand Banks. Through interpretive panels and traveling exhibits, this museum pays tribute to that heritage. See chapter 6, p. 134.
- **Barbour Living Heritage Village (Central Region):** Similar to the Ryan Premises, but on a larger scale. It's not just a restored commercial property, but a series of reconstructed buildings typical of a fishing village (ca. 1900). They're more than just historical monuments, however: These multipurpose buildings also serve as the local museum, theater, and art gallery. See chapter 7, p. 150.
- **Boyd's Cove Beothuk Site (Central Region):** With all the hype about John Cabot discovering Newfoundland, and even the Vikings arriving a millennium ago, it's easy to forget that there were permanent residents here long before the Europeans arrived. Boyd's Cove is one of those sites that help us remember. Although little is known about Newfoundland's now-extinct Beothuk, Boyd's Cove sheds some light on who they were and how they adapted to Newfoundland's harsh environment. See chapter 7, p. 151.

- **Dorset Soapstone Quarry (Central Region):** Even before the Beothuk, there were Dorset people living on the island of Newfoundland. Proof of their existence can be found in the province's earliest known mine, where the Dorset mined soapstone for use as bowls and cooking pots. See chapter 7, p. 158.
- **Port au Choix National Historic Site (Western Newfoundland):** What is it about Port au Choix that has made it the location of choice for human habitation over the last 4,500 years? Archaeologists are still trying to puzzle out the answer from the clues left behind from past civilizations (including the Maritime Archaics, the Groswater, and the Dorset-Paleoeskimo). See chapter 8, p. 187.
- **Grenfell Interpretation Centre (Western Newfoundland):** This is a recommended stop for anyone interested in the early medical history of northern Newfoundland and Labrador. Learn about Sir Wilfred Thomason Grenfell, the English doctor who became a local hero to the Inuit and early settlers of the region. See chapter 8, p. 192.
- **L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site (Western Newfoundland):** Make your first stop the visitor center, to learn about the Vikings who landed at the tip of the Northern Peninsula around A.D. 1000. Then, you'll walk among the sunken foundations of their village. Plus, there is a re-created Viking village, with reenactors on hand to demonstrate how these early settlers might have interacted with each other. See chapter 8, p. 195.
- **Red Bay National Historic Site (Labrador):** Once the whaling capital of the world, the name Red Bay came from the color of the water, which was supposedly so bright with whales' blood that it flowed red. Inside the interpretive center is a reproduction of a wooden whaling boat, surrounded by the mandible (jawbone) of a bowhead whale. The area wasn't treacherous just to whales, however; at least three Spanish galleons are known to have gone down in the waters of Red Bay. For more information, see chapter 9, p. 207.
- **Battle Harbour (Labrador):** One of my favorite places in all of Newfoundland and Labrador, this community, once the hub of Labrador, was abandoned in the 1960s; but thanks to enterprising locals, many buildings have been restored, and you can visit for a day or even stay overnight. Access is by boat in summer only. See chapter 9, p. 208.

THE best FESTIVALS & SPECIAL EVENTS

- **Newfoundland & Labrador Folk Festival (St. John's):** This is an absolute must for lovers of traditional music. The 3-day event takes place in downtown St. John's during the first weekend of August and provides a good variety of music that includes folk, country, bluegrass, and Celtic. See chapter 4, p. 86.
- **Royal St. John's Regatta (St. John's):** This is the biggest event of the year for St. John's; its importance is recognized by its status as a municipal holiday. The oldest continuous sporting event in North America offers a day of fixed-seat rowing races and lots of fun for the entire family at Quidi Vidi Lake. See chapter 4, p. 87.
- **George Street Festival (St. John's):** You'll enjoy the George Street Festival if you're young (or, at the very least, young-at-heart) and don't mind loud music and crowds. During the 6-day event, a 2-block stretch of the downtown street is closed



Each Christmas in Newfoundland outposts—isolated by the ocean, the weather, and the rugged coastline—groups of disguised locals have traditionally wandered amongst the wooden houses.

“Any Mummers allowed in?” someone asks, knocking at a door. The mummers enter: pillow cases, fishing overalls, and crocheted doilies hiding their identities.

Mummering—also called jannying, jennyning, or mumming—is adapted from an old English Christmas custom. The Mummers arrive on one of the twelve days of Christmas to entertain with jokes, songs, and foolery. They change their voices by talking while inhaling and share drinks with the hosts. Although the tradition was legally abolished in the province in

1861, it continued in more remote Newfoundland.

In 1983, “The Mummer’s Song,” recorded by Newfoundland folk duet Simani, largely revived the practice throughout the province.

“There’s big ones ‘n’ small ones ‘n’ tall ones ‘n’ thin, Boys dressed as women and girls dressed as men,” goes the story-telling song, which is fused with Newfoundland humor and character.

If the host guesses someone’s identity, the janny must unmask. Be it stoking the fire, locking the door, or offering a drink of “the strong stuff,” Newfoundlanders employ various tactics to unmask their visitors.

“Is he wearin’ his mother’s big 42 bra?” goes the song. “I knows but I’m not gonna say.”

off, and bars open up their doors and bring in a lineup of terrific entertainment. See chapter 4, p. 86.

- **Shamrock Festival (Avalon Peninsula):** Traditional Irish-Newfoundland music mingles with some modern material in this popular late-July event held outdoors in the community of Ferryland. Many of the province’s best-known performers are from this part of the province, so the lineup is always guaranteed to impress. See chapter 5, p. 101.
- **Summer in the Bight (Eastern Region):** Each year between June and October, the **Rising Tide Theatre** puts on a number of professional shows that give poignant life to the Newfoundland character and lifestyle. Staged at both indoor and outdoor venues, Summer in the Bight includes the renowned **New Founde Lande Trinity Pageant**. See chapter 6, p. 124.
- **The Fish, Fun & Folk Festival (Central Region):** One of the largest and longest-running folk festivals in Newfoundland, this event is held the last full weekend of July in Twillingate. If you want to have a great time with the family and gain deeper insight into what makes Newfoundlanders tick, plan to take in this event. See chapter 7, p. 154.
- **Exploits Valley Salmon Festival (Central Region):** This 5-day family event and salmon celebration is held mid-July in Grand Falls–Windsor. Take time to enjoy a performance at the highly regarded **Summer Theatre Festival**. See chapter 7, p. 157.
- **Gros Morne Theatre Festival (Western Newfoundland):** Treat yourself to a dinner-theater production of excellent regional music, comedy, and drama while in the

area of Gros Morne National Park between June and September. The festival is held in the northern part of the park. Twice weekly, you'll have the chance to enjoy a theatrical performance, as well as taste some of the best pan-fried cod found anywhere. See chapter 8, p. 178.

- **Bakeapple Folk Festival (Labrador):** Time your visit to the Labrador Straits for the second weekend of August, when the cloudberry, or bakeapple berries, are ripe and the biggest summer event of the year is taking place. You'll get 4 days of fun, music, and merriment. See chapter 9, p. 206.

THE best HOTELS & RESORTS

- **Courtyard St. John's:** This is the newest hotel to rise among downtown's historic core. Rooms are stylish, and the friendly and knowledgeable front-desk staff are an unexpected bonus. See chapter 4, p. 68.
- **Homotel on Signal Hill:** The comfortable and spacious guest rooms at this lodging are well equipped with a wide range of modern amenities. Free breakfast is a bonus. See chapter 4, p. 69.
- **Murray Premises Hotel:** You simply can't beat the attention to detail at this beautifully decorated boutique hotel, which was once a waterfront warehouse. The staff and management are top-notch, offering an exceptional standard of service to ensure your stay is enjoyable. See chapter 4, p. 69.
- **Sheraton Hotel Newfoundland:** With more than 300 rooms and the upscale Oppidan restaurant, this is the best-known full-service property in the province. Although it lacks an outwardly Newfoundland style—because of its size and branding—you will still find the unique island character in the personality of the caring and professional staff. See chapter 4, p. 69.
- **Bears Cove Inn:** Don't pick this lodging if a long list of amenities is important to you. But if you're looking for a place where you can see the ocean from inside your room or while sitting on your private deck overlooking the rugged coastline, this is a great choice. See chapter 5, p. 99.
- **The Wilds at Salmonier River:** Even Fido is welcome at this terrific family resort. The Wilds has self-contained cabins, as well as hotel-style rooms in the main building. One of the province's finest golf courses is on-site, and you're just minutes from Salmonier Nature Park. See chapter 5, p. 104.
- **Bird Island Resort:** This resort offers fully equipped efficiency units that are ideal for traveling families. All-ages fun includes mini-golf, horseshoe pits, and a fitness center. This resort offers the closest accommodations to Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve. See chapter 5, p. 107.
- **Terra Nova Resort:** This full-service family resort offers a great kids' program, an outdoor swimming pool, tennis, a challenging 27-hole golf course, and in-house dining, and it's ideally situated for day trips into Terra Nova National Park. See chapter 6, p. 137.
- **BlueWater Lodge & Retreat:** A wonderful place to stay while touring Notre Dame Bay and other points in the Central Region, the lodge has a private, serene setting on a small lake, making it a perfect retreat for anyone really wanting to get away from it all. See chapter 7, p. 145.
- **Marble Inn Resort:** It doesn't have the attitude of the official Marble Mountain Resort, and that's a good thing. Regardless of whether you reserve a modern motel-style unit or upgrade to a 2-bedroom riverfront suite, at Marble Mountain it's all

about enjoying outdoor recreation. The ample on-site amenities (sauna, fitness room, indoor pool, and canoe rentals) add even more value to the package. See chapter 8, p. 168.

- **Sugar Hill Inn:** After a long day of hiking in Gros Morne National Park, this little slice of luxury will be much appreciated. The 11 guest rooms are warm and inviting, and the food is top-notch. See chapter 8, p. 178.

THE best BED & BREAKFASTS & HERITAGE INNS

- **Banberry House:** This beautiful 1892 home has 6 beautiful guest rooms, such as the Labrador Room, with a luxurious bathroom, fireplace, and garden views. A big breakfast of Newfoundland specialties will set you up for a day of city sightseeing. See chapter 4, p. 70.
- **Ryan Mansion:** The choice of visiting royalty, Ryan Mansion is one of the province's grandest bed-and-breakfasts. From the moment they enter the impressive lobby and climb a stairway built by the same craftsman who designed the *Titanic* interior, guests enjoy a wealth of historically luxurious lodging experience. See chapter 4, p. 71.
- **Winterholme Heritage Inn:** Bring your neck brace—you'll need it from constantly staring upward at the ornately carved woodwork. If you're a real romantic, reserve one of the suites with a jetted tub and fireplace. See chapter 4, p. 72.
- **Inn by the Bay:** Who can resist staying in one of "Canada's 10 Prettiest Towns"? This lovely B&B has an attentive owner and a waterfront location, and it's right in the heart of Dildo, an odd-sounding but very beautiful fishing village. See chapter 5, p. 110.
- **Artisan Inn:** This is a wonderful B&B in the scenic village of Trinity. The inn's Ocean Shore Apartment—with a private deck overlooking Trinity Bay—is my favorite room. See chapter 6, p. 122.
- **Fishers' Loft Inn:** A short drive from Trinity, this appealing property with an ethereal atmosphere is perfect for anyone seeking peace, tranquillity, and fine food. See chapter 6, p. 123.
- **Elizabeth J. Cottages:** One of the finest cottage accommodations in all of Newfoundland and Labrador—think fine cotton sheets on an oversize bed, plush bathrobes, a modern entertainment system, polished hardwood floors, and a private deck with sweeping ocean views. See chapter 6, p. 126.
- **Cape Anguille Lighthouse Inn:** Experience life as a lighthouse keeper at this unique accommodation high above the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Aside from gracious hospitality and magnificent scenery, bird-watchers will love the diversity of species present in the area. See chapter 8, p. 164.
- **Quirpon Lighthouse Inn:** This isolated island retreat is the perfect escape from techno-society. Amenities include hearty home-cooked meals, endless waves, iceberg views, and conversations with whales. It's just you and your thoughts for company. See chapter 8, p. 194.
- **Battle Harbour Inn:** Looking to step back in time? This small inn accessible only by boat will enable you to do just that. It has wood stoves and oil lamps, and the setting is in the oldest intact salt-fish community in the province. See chapter 9, p. 209.

1 THE best RESTAURANTS

- **AQUA Kitchen & Bar:** Enjoy creative seafood dishes in a contemporary setting at this classy restaurant in the heart of the capital. See chapter 4, p. 73.
- **Bacalao:** It didn't take long for Bacalao to become one of St. John's most popular dining rooms, shortly after it opened. Order the medallions of caribou topped with partridgeberry sauce to find out why. See chapter 4, p. 73.
- **Nautical Nellies:** Great food, big portions, and reasonable prices in bustling pub surroundings—that's what you'll find at Nautical Nellies. It's both small and very popular, making it hard to get a table. See chapter 4, p. 75.
- **Rocket Bakery and Fresh Food:** This market-style cafe is the perfect place for an inexpensive meal while exploring downtown St. John's. See chapter 4, p. 77.
- **Skipper's Restaurant:** After touring the historical sites in Bonavista and taking in the views at Cape Bonavista, it's worth searching out this lovely waterfront restaurant if you like seafood and don't want to pay big prices. You'll find terrific chowder and, for the more adventurous, local delicacies such as fried dough smothered in molasses. See chapter 6, p. 127.
- **Bay of Islands Bistro:** Expect simple, tasty cooking married with professional service at one of the best restaurants west of the capital. See chapter 8, p. 169.
- **Anchor Café:** Beyond the ship-shaped entrance is a simple dining room with a wide-ranging menu of inexpensive seafood. My favorite combo is seafood chowder followed by a shrimp burger. See chapter 8, p. 186.
- **Norseman Restaurant:** Located at the extreme northern tip of the northern peninsula, this restaurant is a fantastic surprise. The waterfront setting is a delight, the food is as creative and well presented as the best restaurants in St. John's, and the service is professional. See chapter 8, p. 193.
- **Whaler's Restaurant:** Want the best fish and chips in Labrador? Then plan on trying the chalupa fish and chips at Whaler's. They're tasty, tangy, and value-priced. And the restaurant is in historic Red Bay, where you can finally find the answer to the riddle, "What is a chalupa?" See chapter 9, p. 207.