

Maine: Acadia National Park

Bike Vacation Only

With the depth of cycling, culture, and cuisine in Acadia National Park, why go anywhere else? This VBT cycling adventure gives you five days packed with Acadia discovery. VBT's gravel bikes are perfect for exploring Mount Desert Island's network of carriage roads—and our local trip leaders give you the inside scoop on their history. Pedal through charming seaside villages, explore local lakes, and enjoy a boat ride across Frenchman Bay to spend the day exploring the Schoodic Peninsula. With four nights at an expansive oceanfront property along Frenchman Bay, you'll spend mornings lingering over breakfast with sweeping coastal views—and evenings unwinding by the water or strolling the shoreline. Featuring indoor and outdoor pools and direct access to the bay, this is the perfect vantage point to enjoy all Acadia National Park has to offer.

Cultural Highlights

- Ride along Rockefeller's historic, car-free carriage roads through the heart of Acadia National Park.
- Crack into a classic Maine lobster bake at your oceanside retreat, with sweeping views of Frenchman Bay.
- Pause at Jordan Pond, where pristine waters reflect the twin peaks of the Bubbles—and savor the famous popovers at the historic Jordan Pond House.
- Pedal through a refreshing and unspoiled landscape of rugged coastline, forested coves, and working harbors.
- Ferry across Frenchman Bay to the Schoodic Peninsula—the quiet side of Acadia—for a day of peaceful riding, crashing surf, and a classic wharfside lunch.

What to Expect

This tour features a mix of easy terrain and moderate hills, making it ideal for both beginner and experienced cyclists. Van support is limited within Acadia National Park due to the nature of the biking trails, but the support vehicle will be available at designated locations. On days with limited vehicle access, your trip leader will provide extra snacks and supplies to ensure you're well supported.

Tour Duration: 5 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 13-26 miles

Average Cycling Time: 2-4.5 hours

Group size: 14-18 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

May 65°/45°, June 74°/54°, July 79°/59°, August 78°/59°, September 70°/52°, October 59°/42°

Average Rainfall (in.)

May 4.6, June 4.1, July 3.5, August 3.3, September 4.5, October 5.3

DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins

VBT Pre-Tour Extension Guests:

Please enjoy your included breakfast this morning at the Cadillac Café, located on the hotel property. The continental breakfast features freshly baked muffins and breads, cereal, yogurt, whole fresh fruit, hot items, and a selection of milk, juices, coffee, and teas. Lunch is on your own before the tour officially begins.

VBT Tour-Only Guests:

Please make your own arrangements for travel to your hotel in Bar Harbor. If you are flying to Maine, VBT offers a complimentary shuttle from Bangor International Airport. The shuttle operates on a “show and go” basis and makes a single departure at 1:00 p.m. from the airport to the hotel. No reservations are required or available. If your flight is delayed or you arrive after the shuttle has departed, you will need to arrange your own transportation to Bar Harbor. The drive from Bangor to Bar Harbor takes just over an hour.

Guests driving to the tour may leave their car in the Atlantic Oceanside Hotel parking lot at no charge for the duration of the tour.

Nestled on 12 oceanfront acres overlooking Frenchman Bay, the Atlantic Oceanside Hotel offers comfortable accommodations and resort-style amenities. Guests enjoy access to indoor and outdoor swimming pools, 500 feet of private beach, and seasonal nature cruises departing from the hotel’s private pier. The Island Explorer, a free seasonal shuttle, provides easy transportation to downtown Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park, which is just one mile away.

Bar Harbor will be your base for the duration of your tour and is the perfect gateway to exploring Acadia National Park by bike. This vibrant seaside town offers scenic coastal charm and a lively downtown filled with shops, galleries, and restaurants. Bar Harbor’s natural beauty and welcoming atmosphere make it an ideal start to your adventure.

Hotel check-in begins at 3:00 p.m. If you arrive earlier, you may leave your luggage with reception. Changing facilities are available should you wish to change into your biking attire.

All Guests:

At 3:00 p.m., meet your VBT trip leaders in front of the hotel lobby for a rolling bike fitting and safety session, followed by a short warm-up ride.

Later, gather again for a tour orientation and welcome reception, followed by a classic lobster bake dinner at the hotel.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Witch Hole Pond Warm-Up Ride — 9 miles

What to Expect:

Ride from your hotel through Bar Harbor to reach the Witch Hole Pond Loop, and enjoy your first ride on Acadia National Park's carriage roads before returning the way you came.

Cumulative Distance Range: 9 miles

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2: Acadia's Park Loop Road

Today, cycle Acadia's famous Park Loop Road, a scenic 27-mile route showcasing some of the park's most iconic natural landmarks. Along the way, pause at Sand Beach, a striking crescent of white sand tucked between rocky cliffs, and Thunder Hole, where incoming waves crash into a natural rock inlet, sending water high into the air with a thunderous boom.

Stop at Jordan Pond to soak in the tranquil views of the clear glacial pond and the twin peaks of the Bubbles in the distance. Here, you'll enjoy an included lunch at the historic Jordan Pond House, known for its sweeping lawn and traditional popovers served with jam and tea. Afterward, continue to Day Mountain Loop for additional scenic miles before returning to Bar Harbor.

This afternoon, you may wish to join a sunset sail aboard the schooner *Margaret Todd* (at your own

expense), or spend time exploring Bar Harbor's charming boutiques, galleries, and cafes. For dinner on your own, choose from one of the town's many excellent restaurants.

As a convenient option, guests may also wish to book a boat tour directly from the Atlantic Oceanside Hotel with Acadian Boat Tours, offering nature cruises, puffin and lighthouse tours, and more—right from the property's private pier. While you can still book activities like the *Margaret Todd* sail or kayaking excursions in downtown Bar Harbor, keep in mind that the hotel is about a mile outside the town center. To reach these locations, you may use the Island Explorer shuttle, which provides free and easy transport into town.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Bar Harbor to Jordan Pond House — 15 miles

Afternoon: Jordan Pond House to Bar Harbor — 17 miles

What to Expect:

Leave your hotel and enter Acadia National Park, arriving at Sand Beach—a picturesque stretch of shoreline nestled between granite cliffs. Here, you can relax on the sand or take a short hike along the cliffs, offering dramatic coastal views. Continue your ride on the paved Park Loop Road, passing iconic landmarks such as Thunder Hole, where waves crash into a natural inlet with a booming roar; Otter Cliffs, one of the highest headlands along the Atlantic coast; and the Fabbri Memorial, a tribute to Italian-American explorer Ensign Fabbri. Arrive at the Jordan Pond House for an included lunch. Afterward, you may choose to extend your ride onto the gravel carriage roads for a loop that gradually ascends Day Mountain, offering sweeping views from the summit, before winding back past the quiet shores of Bubble Pond and returning to Bar Harbor.

Cumulative Distance Range: 15 – 32 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3: Cycle Carriage Roads around Eagle Lake to Northeast Harbor

Today, the tranquility of biking in Acadia National Park is in full force as you pedal along the park's famed car-free carriage roads, a network of scenic crushed-stone paths commissioned by John D.

Rockefeller Jr.

to offer visitors a peaceful and immersive way to experience the park's natural beauty. Your route loops around Eagle Lake, offering forested views and glimpses of sparkling water, before continuing on to the picturesque village of Northeast Harbor. This quiet island enclave, with its sheltered marina filled with sailboats and yachts, is known for its understated elegance and charm. Explore its boutiques, galleries, and eateries, or take time to visit the nearby Asticou Azalea Garden

and Thuya Garden—two horticultural gems tucked into the hillside above the harbor. The Azalea Garden, inspired by Japanese design, features a serene pond, winding paths, and beautifully manicured plantings, while the Thuya Garden is a hidden oasis of terraced borders, stonework, and native blooms—especially magical when the flowers are in peak bloom.

After lunch on your own, you may choose to return to Bar Harbor by bike, following the carriage roads west of Eagle Lake, past Bubble Pond.

This evening, enjoy an included optional sunset sea kayaking excursion, where you'll glide through the quiet coastal waters off Bar Harbor. Later, explore the town's lively dining scene with dinner on your own.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Carriage Roads to Northeast Harbor — 16 miles

Afternoon: Northeast Harbor to Bar Harbor — 13 miles

What to Expect:

Carriage Roads to Northeast Harbor:

Depart the Atlantic Oceanside Hotel. At just under four miles, you'll merge with the carriage roads of Acadia National Park and continue along them past Eagle Lake—one of the park's largest bodies of water—to reach the charming town of Northeast Harbor. You'll have time to explore and enjoy lunch on your own here. Be sure to visit the beautiful Azalea and Thuya Gardens in Northeast Harbor before departing—they're truly a highlight of the area.

Northeast Harbor to Bar Harbor:

To return to Bar Harbor, rejoin the carriage roads at the Brown Mountain Gatehouse and follow the route that skirts the southern tip of Jordan Pond, continues past Bubble Pond, and traces the west

side of Eagle Lake. You'll wind your way back to your hotel along the carriage roads and town streets.

This afternoon also offers an option for additional miles, if you'd like to extend your ride.

Cumulative Distance Range: 16 – 29 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4: Explore the Schoodic Peninsula

After breakfast, board the morning bike ferry for a scenic 45-minute crossing of Frenchman Bay to reach the Schoodic Peninsula—the only section of Acadia National Park located on the mainland. A favorite among locals, Schoodic offers a quieter, more rugged experience than Mount Desert Island, with classic “Down East” fishing villages, unspoiled coastline, and sweeping ocean views.

Disembarking in Winter Harbor, begin your ride along a beautifully paved route that winds past rocky shoreline, forested stretches, and views of working lobster boats and distant islands. The peninsula is known for its dramatic headlands, quiet coves, and thriving natural habitats—a perfect place to spot seabirds and enjoy the sounds of the sea. The peaceful atmosphere and scenery offer a more off-the-beaten-path perspective of coastal Maine.

Your route leads to the quiet fishing village of Corea, where you'll enjoy an included lunch at a beloved wharfside eatery set right on the working harbor. The setting is rustic and picturesque, with views of lobster boats and seabirds offering a true taste of Maine's coastal life. The casual, welcoming atmosphere makes it an ideal place to relax and soak in the charm of the region.

After lunch, return to Winter Harbor to catch the ferry back to Bar Harbor. If you'd like to extend your ride, consider continuing on to Grindstone Point, a peaceful peninsula offering lovely water views and a quiet stretch of open road before the day concludes.

This evening, gather back at the inn for a festive farewell dinner, celebrating your memorable journey through the natural beauty and coastal character of Acadia.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Schoodic Loop Road — 20 miles

What to Expect:

Begin your day with a scenic 45-minute ferry ride from Bar Harbor across Frenchman Bay to Winter Harbor, located on the Schoodic Peninsula. Here, you'll enjoy peaceful rural riding on the mainland section of Acadia National Park. This uncrowded and unspoiled corner of the park showcases the rugged beauty of Maine's coast, with quiet roads that pass through traditional fishing villages, along secluded bays, and beside stretches of dramatic, surf-pounded shoreline. After an included waterside lunch, continue your ride through this tranquil landscape as you make your way back to Winter Harbor for the return ferry to Bar Harbor.

Cumulative Distance Range: 20 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5: Cycle from Bar Harbor to Great Head Trail for Optional Hike / Optional Independent Ride to Cadillac Mountain / Optional Shuttle to Bangor / Your VBT Vacation Ends

This morning, enjoy one last ride in Acadia National Park, with the option to combine your ride with a scenic coastal hike. Depart from your hotel and ride through Bar Harbor, following Schooner Head Road back into the park to Sand Beach, where you'll find the trailhead for the Great Head Trail. This relatively short but rewarding loop offers panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean, Sand Beach, and the Beehive's dramatic cliffs. After your hike, return by bike to the hotel.

Alternatively, you may choose an independent ride to the summit of Cadillac Mountain, the highest point on the U.S. Atlantic coast. This iconic climb is a challenge for cyclists, with steady elevation gain and sweeping views that reward your effort. On a clear day, the summit offers stunning vistas of Frenchman Bay, Bar Harbor, and the surrounding islands—an unforgettable finale to your journey.

As you and your fellow travelers bid adieu, you'll likely agree with Maine's state motto—this truly is "the way life should be."

VBT has arranged changing facilities at the hotel for your use between noon and 1:00 p.m. so you can shower and prepare for departure. The Atlantic Oceanside

Hotel kindly requests that guests check out and depart by 1:00 p.m.

A return shuttle to Bangor International Airport will leave the hotel at 1:00 p.m.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Bar Harbor to Great Head Trailhead — 9 miles | Great Head Hike — 3 miles

What to Expect:

Ride to the Great Head trailhead, enjoying beautiful ocean views along the way. An optional, easy hike on the Great Head Trail is available. Alternatively, you may choose to ride to the summit of Cadillac Mountain today.

Cumulative Distance Range: 9 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Atlantic Oceanside Hotel (Days 1-4)

Ideally located on 12 acres of oceanfront property, the Atlantic Oceanside hotel offers beautiful views, waterfront access, and walking distance to historic downtown Bar Harbor. Just a mile from Acadia National Park, this stunning hotel embodies the authentic Maine experience. With six different buildings to choose from, the accommodation options range from the historic estate to newly renovated portside rooms, each with ocean views and modern amenities. All of the 153 rooms also come fully equipped with a private balcony, complimentary WiFi, air conditioning, and a flatscreen TV. With 500 feet of private beach, as well as nature cruises around Frenchman Bay, the hotel also features indoor and outdoor swimming pools, as well as indoor and outdoor dining serving local and international cuisine.