

# Travel

CLOSE-UP ON MOUNT DESERT ISLAND, MAINE | BY NECÉE REGIS | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

## A VIEW TO BEHOLD

THE MOUNTAINS MEET THE SEA IN THIS MAINE COMMUNITY RICH IN CULTURE

From an aerial view, Mount Desert Island looks like a paw print at the edge of the sea along Maine's northern coast. The third-largest island on the Eastern Seaboard, it's home to Acadia National Park, a 41,000-acre preserve that encompasses glacier-carved mountains, dense forests, marshes, meadows, freshwater lakes, and a sandy beach on the frigid Atlantic. • There's only one road onto the island. On the eastern side, the lively town of Bar Harbor acts as the commercial and social hub of the community. One also finds there the ports of Northeast Harbor, with art galleries, crafts by local artisans, and handmade contemporary jewelry, and Seal Harbor, a boat-bejeweled cove. • The western half of the island is referred to as the "quietside." Here, Southwest Harbor is known for commercial fishing and boatbuilding as well as its lovely Main Street with restaurants, shops, and a library. To traverse the island you must navigate around Somes Sound, the only natural fiord on the East Coast. • Though one can dine well and shop creatively, visitors primarily come here for the magnificent landscape and the opportunity to kayak, sail, hike, bike, fish, and generally get away from it all.



### MOUNT DESERT ISLAND

- POPULATION 2,100
- WEBSITE [www.mountdesertchamber.org](http://www.mountdesertchamber.org)
- DISTANCE FROM BOSTON 280 miles
- ODD FACT Bar Harbor has a yearly pajama parade

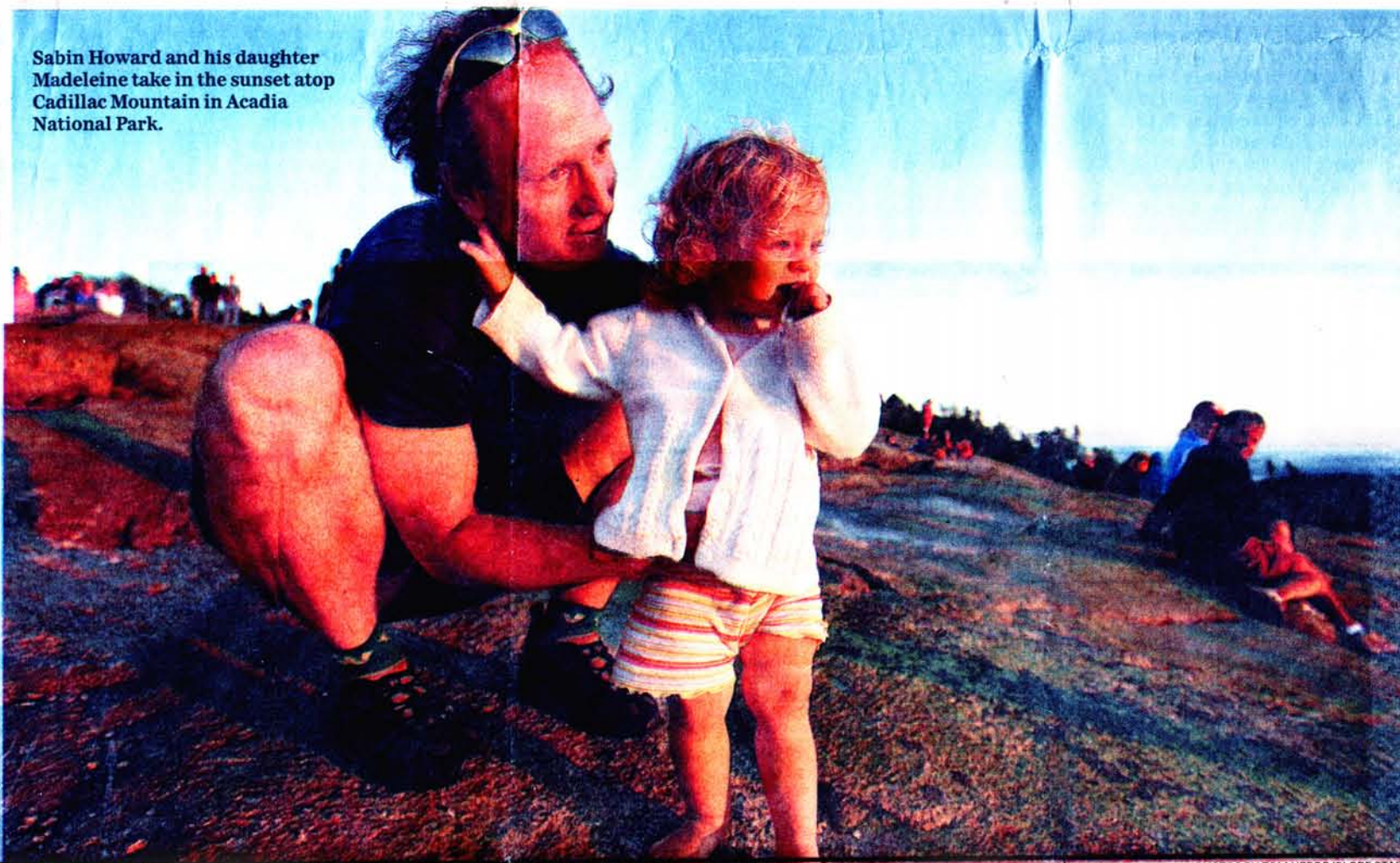
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### DO

**Acadia National Park** offers myriad choices for those who want to get out in nature. Whether you favor hiking, biking, swimming, bird-watching, or all of the above, the best way to begin is a stop at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center (off Route 3, north of Bar Harbor, [www.nps.gov/acad](http://www.nps.gov/acad), open mid-April to Oct. 31, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. — it stays open later from July through September — \$20 per vehicle for a seven-day pass). Here you can watch a 15-minute orientation program on the history of Acadia, see a scale model of the park, pick up some maps, and get advice from park staff on activities that best suit your interests. There's also a full schedule of ranger-led activities. The Park Loop Road offers magnificent views for those who prefer driving to hiking.

Chickadees, loons, bald eagles, and songbirds are not only found in the park, they are also carved in wood and displayed — more than 200 of them — at the **Wendell Gilley Museum** (4 Herrick Road, Southwest Harbor, 207-244-7555, [www.wendellgilleymuseum.org](http://www.wendellgilleymuseum.org), \$5). It's estimated that Gilley, a Mount Desert resident, carved more than 10,000 birds in his lifetime, becoming known as one of the premier bird carvers in the country. Demonstrations are given most days when the museum is open, and wannabe carvers should check the schedule, as workshops for various skill levels are held throughout the year.

Sabin Howard and his daughter Madeleine take in the sunset atop Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park.



PHOTOS BY TOM HERZD/GLOBE STAFF

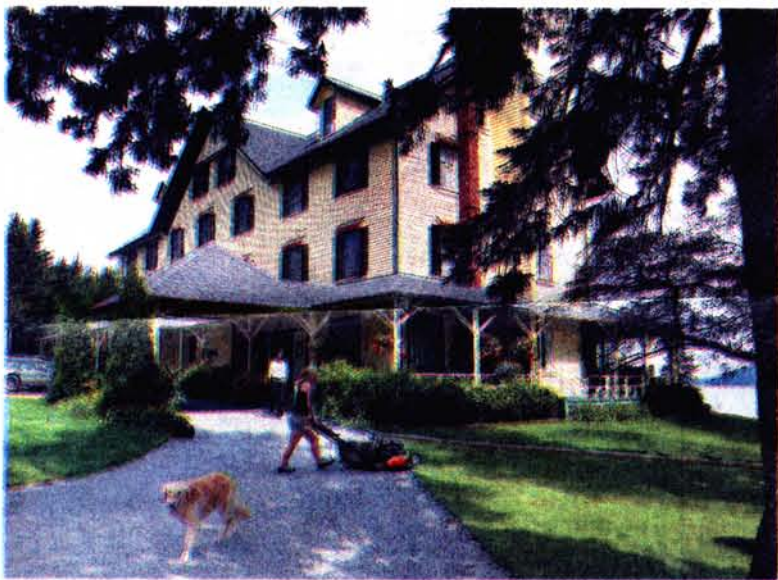
### FUEL

You have to make a reservation to get into **XYZ** (Bennett Lane, off Route 102A, Manset, Southwest Harbor, 207-244-5221, entrees \$22), the place with the best Mexican food in New England. We're not talking Tex-Mex, either. The name stands for Xalapa, Yucatán, and Zacatecas, three regions where the owners spend their winters gathering such recipes as camarones ajo (tiger shrimp with garlic, ancho, and poblano chiles).

Now in its eighth year, **Havana Restaurant** (318 Main St., Bar Harbor, 207-288-CUBA, [www.havanamaine.com](http://www.havanamaine.com), entrees \$18-\$34) offers Latin-inspired innovative and tasty cuisine in a casual-chic setting. Grilled lobster is served with chorizo, pineapple, and mixed veggies with a green chili-citrus sauce. Duck empanadas offer a Maine spin, pairing blueberry and jalapeno coulis with mango, mint, and avocado salsa.

If you've heard the slogan about eating locally, you can do so at **Eden** (78 West St., Bar Harbor, 207-288-4422, [www.barharborvegetarian.com](http://www.barharborvegetarian.com), entrees \$13.50-\$16.50), a vegan cafe where elegantly prepared meals feature produce from local farms. Organic wines and locally brewed beer are also available, and all are enhanced by the water view.

### REST



The Claremont Hotel in Southwest Harbor offers traditionally elegant rooms that hark back to an earlier era.

Sailboats on the sound provide a picture-perfect view from the sloping lawn at the **Claremont Hotel** (22 Claremont Road, Southwest Harbor, 800-244-5036, [www.thclaremonthotel.com](http://www.thclaremonthotel.com), fall rates \$121-\$167). The hotel, open since 1884, offers traditionally elegant rooms that hearken to an earlier era when tennis, croquet, and cocktails on the veranda were part of the daily routine. Here, they still are.

The **Inns at Ullikana** (16 The Field, Bar Harbor, 207-288-9552, [www.ullikana.com](http://www.ullikana.com), off-season rates \$125-\$240) is located in a romantic 1885 English Tudor house surrounded by gardens. Set back from Main Street, Ullikana has a breakfast terrace overlooking Frenchman Bay.

There are no campgrounds in Acadia National Park, but there are plenty around the island. Some, including **Bar Harbor Campground** (409 State Highway 3, 207-288-5185, [www.barharborcamping.com](http://www.barharborcamping.com), \$25-\$32), have ocean and mountain views, as well as hot showers, modern bathhouses, and heated swimming pools.

### PLAY

If your kids' interest wanes on long whale-watching tours, consider an under-two-hour lobster and seal watch aboard the **Bar Harbor Whale Watch Co.** boat the Miss Samantha (1 West St., 207-288-9800, 888-553-WALE, [www.barharborwhales.com](http://www.barharborwhales.com), adult \$22, junior \$15, child \$5). On the first leg of the trip, the crew hauls lobster traps from the ocean floor and the captain explains how they work. It's a hands-on experience for the kids, who are allowed to touch not only lobsters and crabs but also sea urchins, starfish, and sea cucumbers. Halfway through the voyage on Frenchman Bay, the lobster gear is stowed and the boat cruises to an island where harbor seals swim and bask on rocks.

When the kids get tired of shopping, riding bikes, or hiking, then let them eat cake! Or popovers, perhaps. **Wildwood Stables**, located near the Park Loop Road in Acadia, offers a **Tea & Popover Carriage Ride** (207-276-3622 to reserve) along one of the scenic carriage roads. Watch the foliage change from a horse-drawn carriage as you travel to the Jordan Pond House, where tea is served with popovers and strawberry jam on a lawn overlooking the pond.

### SPEND

Twenty-four years ago, seven artists banded together to form a co-op to promote their work. Today, **Island Artisans** (99 Main St., Bar Harbor, 207-288-4214, [www.islandartisans.com](http://www.islandartisans.com)) is known for its high-quality crafts made by the original group and many other Maine artisans. Whether you're looking for textiles, pottery, paper, wood, stone, or metal, you'll find it here. Carole Beal's green and white stoneware pottery, reminiscent of white birch forests in the mountains of Acadia, is hard to resist.

While strolling along Main Street in Northeast Harbor, with its old-time bakery, art galleries, and clothing shops, it's worth looking for **Shaw Contemporary Jewelry** (100 Main St., 207-276-5000, [www.shawjewelry.com](http://www.shawjewelry.com)). Whether you like something sculptural, like Maine artist Devta Doolan's bold semiprecious stones in high-karat gold settings, or something more traditional, like Barbara Heinzel's classically inspired precious stones set in embossed and incised gold surfaces, there's sure to be something tempting. The handsome showroom also presents rotating shows that feature Asian antiques, Inuit sculptures, Modernist paintings, and artist-made books.

### PARTY

Most night life on Mount Desert Island consists of lying on your back and stargazing. For those whose circadian rhythms are more urban, you can find darts, dancing, karaoke, and live music at **Carmen Verandah** (119 Main St., Bar Harbor, 207-288-2766, [www.carmenverandah.com](http://www.carmenverandah.com), dinner \$10-\$25), "a contemporary dinner club." Open seven nights May 1-Nov. 1, it has a changing roster of performers including blues, rock, funk, and jazz acts, as well as DJs.

The recently restored **Criterion Theater** (35 Cottage St., Bar Harbor, 207-288-3441 information, 288-5829 tickets, [www.criteriontheater.com](http://www.criteriontheater.com)), an Art Deco gem that first opened in 1932, offers a diverse selection of events, including feature movies, the Bar Harbor Jazz Festival, opera, dramatic performances, and live music. It's worth the price of admission just to see the place.

A view of the islands off the coast of Mount Desert Island. Whale watches and other scenic tours are provided out of Bar Harbor.

