Atlantic Canada - Waterfront Life, Whale Watching and a Different Holiday Experience

For the twin pleasures of bustling, international cities and miles of breathtaking unspoilt countryside, the Atlantic side of Canada is the place to visit. Known as the Maritime Provinces, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick are an excellent focus for a coastal adventure peppered with fun night life and the chance to get up close to the natural habitat of rare bird and animal species. Halifax and Nova Scotia A tour might usefully start in Halifax, Nova Scotia (5.5 hours flying time from the UK). Halifax is a lively city with a deep connection to the UK as a formed British dependency. You can visit Citadel Hill with its 19th-century star-shaped fort (a National Historic Site of Canada), the Public Gardens, the fascinating harbour front with its military heritage. You might also visit Fairview Cemetery, where over 100 people who died on the doomed liner Titanic have found their resting place. The waterfront also has numerous traditional pubs offering local ales and Gaelic tunes, a reminder of course, that these parts were first settled by Scottish Highlanders - hence the name "New Scotland" - Nova Scotia. Halifax is also the base for a tour to one of the most photographed locations n Canada, Peggy's Cove, which is overlooked by Canada's only light house which has a post office. Cape Breton Island After Halifax, a trip to Cape Breton Island, said to be one of the earliest European settlements in North America, can be followed by a stay in Baddeck. Baddeck has the Museum dedicated to former summer resident and famous inventor Alexander Graham Bell. Baddeck also gives you the base for the Cabot Trail, a circular tour on a highway carved high into the mountains, taking in Cape Breton National Park and several traditional village where Scottish customs are still the norm. Price Edward Island Travelling from Nova Scotia to Prince Edward Island is by ferry from Caribou to Charlottetwon across the Northumbria Strait. Historic Charlottetown is where the Union of Canada was discussed and ratified in 1864, and is the island's capital. The city also has the colourful Great George Street and the restored and bustling waterfront. It is also the gateway to the rest of Price Edward Island, which includes the superb PEI National Park with its sand dunes, sandstone cliffs, forests, salt marshes and some excellent beaches. New Brunswick Onwards from Price Edward Island to New Brunswick is an experience in itself, via the 8-mile Confederation Bridge. Here you can visit the Arcadian villages of Boutouche and Le Pays de Sagouine, this latter being a lively village with theatre, music, comedy and live entertainment all geared to the unique Arcadian culture. You might also want to try catching your own lobster and enjoying a fine seafood dinner on board a specially-organised cruise. Other New Brunswick towns to visit are Monckton and of course Fredericton, the capital, both with plenty of themed history re-creating the life and times of the early settlers. St John and the Bay of Fundy After Fredericton you might travel to St John and the Bay of Fundy, with its concentration of over 20 species of whale including Minkes, Finbacks, Humpbacks and the rare Right Whale. Cruises operate to ensure you have every chance to see these magnificent creatures. Saint John itself has its own charm, with easy style and plenty of good restaurants with local specialities including fiddleheads (violin-shaped ferns that grow along the riverbanks), tarte au sucre (a Brayonnne sugar pie) or poutine (grated raw and mashed potatoes wrapped around fresh pork). It has the Old City Market and the fascinating "Reversing Falls" where water flows backwards due to the force of incoming tides. The route back to Halifax, takes you via Hopewell Rocks, where you can see the world's highest tides which can rise to an amazing 50 metres. There is a great deal to discover in this region of Canada - easily managed by self drive car hire and use of local tours, but equally lending itself to a 14 or 18 day coach tour for those who prefer to leave the driving and planning to others.

About the Author

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