

Best Things To Do In Portland, Maine

GAME TIME: Ready to play two truths and a lie? Let's see how much you know about little ol' Portland before reading on.

Pick which one you think is a lie, and don't even think about Googling!

1. Portland is the birthplace of author Stephen King.
2. There's only one city named Portland in America.
3. The world's first chewing gum factory was built in Portland.

And? If you guessed number two as the lie, then you are correct-o! Chances are it's because you likely already knew there's another Portland, which is in Oregon. Otherwise, you wouldn't be on this page!

Most people (even some of us purebred Americans) commonly associate the name Portland with only Oregon. But as a matter of fact, that city was named *after* the Portlanders of Maine. Well, ain't that a kick?

So, we're glad to see you've straightened out your map by giving this underrated New-England town a chance to visit. And just by looking at the map and slightly tilting your head, you could say that the US looks similar to the KFC chicken breast (let it be fried, please). So, if you don't know yet, Portland would be on the far upper-right corner, at the tip of our almighty "chicken bone."

That's right; Portland of Maine might not always be what people have in mind when they think of 'Merica.' However, for the small, tucked-away city that Portland is, it's got a lot to 'cluck' about.

Having sailed far from those early days of English bonnets and frills, you'll find Portland today as a seemingly fun and 'happenin' corner – just a tad bit off to the side from the popular kids.

From being recognized as an up-and-coming music scene by Rolling Stone to stimulating a hub of passionate craft beer breweries, lobster-fueled diets, and tattooed artists arm-in-arm with the cook who's been baking since 89' - this has been Portland at its finest.

But oh wait, there's still much more! Read on to explore Portland, Maine.

You're Here For Lobster Rolls

"It's just crab on bread" is what someone would usually grunt about as they pass through the vibrant eateries of Portland. Yet, if heard by any Mainer, that tourist would be called a "flatlander" *and* with an "idiot" added before it.

Maine largely thrives on the marine industry, which pumps life into Portland's very soul. So, the 'Maine Lobster' is what you should be eating as you stare out at all those lighthouses.

For hours, one could debate whether mayo sauce should be mixed in with lobster claw or how naked the lobster meat should be. But if one thing's for sure – the Mainers know there's no single true definition of the Maine lobster roll. With tens of thousands of bars and restaurants

offering this state dish, finding the best one can be pretty subjective. Still, here are a few places to try!

[Becky's Diner](#)

390 Commercial St, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-773-7070

Talk about being the most all-American, small-town diner that there is. Becky's is where the jocks go after hours, where the elderly retire, and where Becky herself practically grew up.

Since 1992, this waterfront diner has been serving locals and tourists alike, such as hearty breakfast meals to a quarter-pound of fresh lobster meat. Fight all you want over whether mayo or melted butter is better but don't forget to order "The Hobson's Wharf." Becky's also made it on the '25 Best Lobster Rolls in New England.'

So, slide in there at one of the booths and say hi to Becky for us!

[Old Port Sea Grill And Raw Bar](#)

93 Commercial St, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-879-6100

If you're looking for something more upscale, then we're serving a suggested plate of the Old Port Sea Grill and Raw Bar. Since 2002, the restaurant has been a classic hit on Portland's dining landscape.

Their menu features an extensive line of fresh raw oysters, with highlights being the Local Monkfish and the chick-pea-covered Local Hake. Oh, and the grilled Faroe Island Salmon!

Also, notice when first walking in, you'll see a classy lounge area with a 250-gallon fish tank and concrete bar.

[The Highroller Lobster Co.](#)

04102, 104 Exchange St, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-536-1623

Writing this review just gets more appetizing. Rather than reading on, why don't you just move on over to The Highroller Lobster Co.!

What started as simply two guys and a hot dog cart in 2015, this now full-blown restaurant serves some of New England's finest lobster rolls on brioche buns. Thousands flock here to also try their BLT, the Fried Lobby Pop, and the Lobster Rangoons.

Yet, founders Andy and Baxter never truly abandoned their truck life, since they still operate at both the restaurant in Portland and on the road for beer-fests all over the world!

You're Also Here For Blueberry Pie

Being a fertile-soil state for thriving wild blueberry bushes, Main is known for harvesting these tiny, sweet fruits that leave your lips a cool shade of blue.

And what's the best thing to do with blueberries? Make a pie out of them.

[Two Fat Cats Bakery](#)

195 Lancaster Street, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-347-5144

740 Broadway, South Portland, ME 04106, USA
(207)-536-7713

One of the best places to get Maine's signature fruit pie is *Two Fats Cats Bakery*. Right after some lobster tails, come on to this low-key small shop on either Lancaster St (newest location) or Broadway.

You wouldn't think twice about it, too, as it offers very little indoor seating and a couple just out front. But you'll soon smell the dark aroma of cocoa mixed with spices that all wonderfully make up their famous blueberry pies.

Spend a Day at a Park

When you've got your tongues tied and twisted (and maybe blue) with seafood and pies, it's easy to forget that Portland is one of mother nature's favorite daughters.

[Eastern Promenade](#)

Eastern Promenade Trail, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-775-2411

To get the full Portland waterfront experience, consider visiting this picturesque 68-acre waterfront park. Grab a beer and frolic along the 2-mile park trail, passing along small beaches and patches of grassy areas and hills.

[Fort Williams Park](#)

1000 Shore Rd, Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107, USA
(207)-799-0881

Off in Cape Elizabeth, Fort Williams was once an active military fort from the late 1870s to mid-1960s. What remains are the ashes of our country's pride and the iconic Portland Head Light, the park's most selfie-bombing spot.

[Casco Bay Islands](#)

56 Commercial Street, Portland, Maine 04101, USA

(207)-774-7871

With a coastline of 3,478 miles, which is longer than California (3,427), you would think this quaint little town boasts more beaches. However, Casco Bay Islands make up for this. They're a group of islands, each with its own personality, and ferries are accessible year-round.

Say 'Hello' to Victoria and Hipsters

As a bustling cultural and coastal city, Portland can amaze you with one hour of high-strung aristocrats in powder-white wigs and then an hour of remarkably groomed bandholz beards.

[Portland Museum of Art](#)

7 Congress St, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-775-6148

In the heart of the art district, there sits the Portland Museum of Art, which notoriously houses iconic names, such as Andy Warhol and Claude Monet. From thousands of historic treasures covering American and European riches to contemporary sculptures, photographs, and more, your journey awaits you on the other side.

[Victoria Mansion](#)

109 Danforth St, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-772-4841

You haven't seen all of Portland until you explore its rich past and European roots, starting with the Victoria Mansion. This National Historic Landmark was built in the mid-1800s as a tribute to Queen Victoria, and its architectural style was inspired by Italian villas.

As 90% of its original interiors are still well alive and kickin', the mansion today now features hot running showers and an active AC. So, if you're in the market for a new summer home, stop by and sign up for the mansion's long waiting list that tourists wished was real!

Fun Stores

Due to its strategic location near the sea, Portland holds a true and rich history of oceanic trades and a heavy influx of immigrant labor. Today, the city's shopping options greatly reflect its multicultural streets.

[Renys](#)

540 Congress St, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-553-9061

When shopping, Mainers love a good discount, and Renys is as traditional as their love for clam chowder and seafood. Check out this discount retailer, for you'll never know what you'll find!

[Abacus Gallery](#)

44 Exchange St, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-772-4880

Since 1984, this boutique has been one of Old Port's signature shops. From original hand-made jewelry to even affordable and high-end trinkets, get a feel of the old in its two-story, brick-walled landmark.

[Stonewall Kitchen](#)

182 Middle St, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-879-2409

We never forget the foodies! For casual cooks to gourmet chefs, explore the variety of free appetizing samples, regional dishes, and even live cooking classes at this lively food shop.

Neighborhoods to Know

Roughly speaking, you can think of the city as the great divide between the progressive peninsula and the low-key inlanders. The following three neighborhoods reflect different aspects of Portland's personality:

[Old Port](#)

Exchange Street, Portland, ME 04101, USA

With its 19th-century cobblestone streets that swerve and slither at every corner, Old Port is basically the brain of Portland.

As also the main tourist hub, Old Port is where ideas congregate over an overpriced soy latte, or where some of the city's best restaurants, bars, and shops are. Walk out of a posh boutique and end up in some funky, old brick building that hides a cozy speakeasy.

Start around High Street to Franklin Street and make your way through, stopping every once in a while to smell the beer and fries (forget roses).

[Alberta Art District](#)

Congress St., Portland, ME, USA

Don't get your head mixed up with red berets, fake mustaches, and paint palettes. The city's art district is beyond any canvas you've ever seen. It is as eclectic and eccentric as the local artists themselves.

From sidewalk graffiti to ballet dancers, to abstract exhibitions, and much more – the area is a nice blend of funky-town hipsters, soul-searching street performers, and your average Joes.

Come the first Friday of every month, the First Friday Art Walk occurs and is the state's largest monthly cultural event.

[Back Cove](#)

Baxter St., Portland, ME, USA

A quieter reflection of the city, Back Cove is a neighborhood next to the tidal basin on the north side of the city. It is the starting point going towards suburbia and popularly attracts runners to the [Back Cove Trail](#). Colorfully-dressed Victorian complexes and properly trimmed family homes line the low-key residential area. If you're looking to rent an Airbnb for some months but want the quieter backend, then Back Cove is only a short drive from all the hustle and bustle.

Must-Try Live Music Spots

Do you know how to tell when a city is outperforming all other cities in America? When they get their own feature in [Rolling Stone](#).

[Portland House of Music And Events](#)

25 Temple St, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-805-0134

To fuel your night with dancing, Portland House of Music and Events raises the roof when it comes to their extensive menu selections of burgers, salads, and regular Happy Hour. Having recently been renovated downtown, this modern establishment often showcases local music acts.

[Blue](#)

650 Congress St # A, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-774-4111

If you're in the mood for some good ol' blues and getting spazzy jazzy, then join the local crowd at the Blue bar. In particular, every Saturday, they worship jazz with live jams. But, if you're near Blue during the weekdays, you can still catch some open mic nights, stand-ups, and tapas plates with Portland's own twist.

[Thompson's Point](#)

Portland, ME 04102, USA
(207)-747-5288

Once an abandoned railroad yard, Thompson's Point is now one of the most popular outdoor areas to catch some live band music. Also, overlooking the Fore River, you might finally feel like a Mainer as you snack on more lobster rolls while catching one of the best sunset sightings.

Cool and Unusual Things to Do

There is plenty of fun and eccentric things to do around Portland, Maine. Take your pick of the options below!

[Eat a Holy Donut](#)

194 Park Ave, Portland, ME 04102, USA
(207)-874-7774

What better and quirky way than to name your business *Holy Donut*, especially if it will draw dozens in line right out the door? Located on Park Avenue, Exchange Street, and Scarborough, you'll get a taste of the holy spirit in over 18 different flavors.

Try their Maple Bacon, Dark Chocolate with Sea Salt, and Toasted Coconut.

[Portland Schooner Co.](#)

56 Commercial Street, Maine State Pier, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-766-2500

What might be better than daytime ferry trips and yelling like Tarzan on top of lighthouses? Consider boarding a schooner or sailing boat around the city! With three schooners under the National Register of Historic Places, you can get some breath of fresh, salty air that the congested inner city surely won't give you.

[Portland Observatory](#)

138 Congress St, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(207)-774-5561

Standing at seven-stories high, this is the last remaining maritime signal tower in the U.S. Wander its old corridors back into Portland's maritime history.

Other Favs

With its vibrant craft beer scene, there's no such thing as water anymore in Portland. Breweries are found at nearly every corner in town.

[Shipyard Brewing Company](#)

86 Newbury St, Portland, ME 04101, USA
(800)-273-9253

A family-owned business since 1994, Shipyard is one of the forerunners of Maine's modern craft beer brewing.

[Allagash Brewing Company](#)

50 Industrial Way, Portland, ME 04103, USA
(207)-878-5385

One of the most familiar breweries in town, try their Belgian-modeled beer or the infamous Allagash White, plus much more.