

# Hiking in Maine: Producing a wonderful guide for discovery

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By Carey Kish

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This hiker is pleased to introduce the Appalachian Mountain Club's "Best Day Hikes Along the Maine Coast," a new guide designed to take readers on a grand journey of discovery.

I wrote the book and can say with a high degree of confidence that anyone seeking outdoor pleasure and healthful exercise will find it an interesting, useful and trustworthy pathfinder, and a fine complement to the AMC's "Maine Mountain Guide."

The Maine coast ranges more than 230 miles from Kittery to Lubec as the crow flies, but an incredible 3,500 miles when every nook and cranny, and some 3,000 islands are accounted for on the undulating margin along the Gulf of Maine between New Hampshire and Canada.

The topography of the coast is as varied as could be, a natural museum of sandy beaches and rocky headlands, bold ocean cliffs and blueberry barrens, quiet salt marshes and wildlife-rich estuaries, long finger-like peninsulas and deep-water coves, spruce-studded islands and wide bays, pristine lakes and ponds, free-flowing rivers and streams, woods of pine and oak, maple and birch, gentle hills and mountain peaks of pink granite.

Hundreds of miles of foot trails await hikers for many hours and days of exploration through the wealth of conservation lands that protect these special places, from state parks and public lands to federal wildlife refuges, a national park and an estuarine research reserve, to private land trusts and conservation organization properties of every shape, size and character.

In just the last four decades the amount of land in conservation in Maine has increased from 1 percent of the state's area to an estimated 20 percent, or 3.72 million acres.

The hikes are geographically dispersed along the coast to provide the best glimpse into the many and varied possibilities along Maine's coastline and coastal interior, from York County and Casco Bay to the Midcoast to Acadia National Park and Downeast.



Maine's coastal trails vary widely from easy forest paths to moderate oceanfront rambles to strenuous mountain treks, and a measure of each are included. Most of the described hikes will provide an uncommon measure of solitude, while on a handful you will almost always see at least a few people.

Individual hike descriptions include a difficulty rating, distance, elevation gain, estimated time and pertinent trail maps.

Directions to the trailhead and GPS coordinates are included. Trails are described in detail, with notes on pertinent natural, human and geologic history to be found en route, as well as information about flora, fauna, and any landmarks or other points of interest to be encountered. A simple trail map outline and a photo provide perspective.

Through the writing of this book I enjoyed the incredible opportunity of exploring the full length of the Maine coast while also experiencing the bounty of natural beauty that defines its parks, lands and preserves, as well as its people, food and accommodations. What an incredible journey it was.

So many individuals across the state provided assistance along the meandering two-year path that was this book project from start to finish. A huge thank you from the soles of my hiking boots to the depths of my heart to the smile on my sunburned face is due everyone that lent a hand in any way, from my wife and a handful of friends to the good folks at the AMC to the many wonderful individuals in the conservation and recreation arena along the Maine coast and well beyond.

I hope you'll grab a copy and spend some quality time discovering the Maine coast on foot this year.

As for me, I'm celebrating the completion of the book with a thru-hike of the 2,200-mile Appalachian Trail. Look for dispatches direct from the trail in future columns.

*Carey Kish of Southwest Harbor has been exploring Maine's coastal and mountain hiking trails for more than four decades. Follow Carey's adventures in his Maineiac Outdoors blog at:*

*[mainetoday.com/blog/maineiac-outdoors](http://mainetoday.com/blog/maineiac-outdoors)*

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