

Portland, Maine

Lobster-rich Maine won't cost you a claw and a tail

By **CLARKE CANFIELD**
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PORTLAND, Maine — Maine is well-known for its lobsters, but it won't cost you a claw and a tail to visit Portland and the state's southern coast.

There are plenty of things to do on the cheap in Maine's largest city and the surrounding area. Tourists can take boat rides off the coast for less than \$10 a head, see professional baseball at a fraction of the cost of major league games, and enjoy miles of white sand beaches — for free.

PLACES TO GO: There's no better way to see Maine's famed rocky coast and islands than from the water, and the best deal is through Casco Bay Lines, cascobaylines.com, a ferry service linking Portland to six islands in Casco Bay. Summer rates for round-trip tickets range from \$8.20 to \$12.05 a person (children and seniors are half-price).

For that, you'll get to go to the islands and see lobster boats, yachts, oil tankers, seals, seabirds, historic island forts and rocky ledges along the way. If you go to Peaks Island, you can grab lunch, rent a bicycle, visit art galleries and

craft shops, rent a kayak or simply take a stroll.

The Portland Sea Dogs — portlandseadogs.com — the Double-A baseball affiliate of the Boston Red Sox, play at Hadlock Field, which is reminiscent of Fenway Park — except for Fenway's prices. Tickets here go for as little as \$7 for adults and \$4 for children. Hot dogs sell for \$2.75 and a beer can be had for under \$5.

Twenty minutes south of Portland, the oceanside town of Old Orchard Beach — oldorchardbeachmaine.com — is a summer playground with a honky-tonk feel that is a popular vacation destination with its food stands, arcades, carnival rides, waterslides and the rumble of Harley-Davidsons.

The best view in Portland can be found atop the historic Eastland Park Hotel — eastlandparkhotel.com — where the Top of the East lounge offers 360-degree views of the city and surrounding areas. For the price of a drink, you can sit in comfortable couches or at tables and take in panoramic vistas of Portland Harbor, the city's downtown, and the suburbs and countryside to the west. On a clear day, you can see New Hampshire's Mount

Washington, the tallest mountain in the Northeast.

THINGS TO SEE:

There's no shortage of lighthouses in the Portland area. Start off with Portland Head Light — portlandheadlight.com — located in Cape Elizabeth's Fort Williams Park a short drive from Portland.

The lighthouse was commissioned by George Washington and is said to be the most photographed place in Maine. The lighthouse museum charges \$2 for adults and \$1 for children. Once you're done with the lighthouse, you can hike the park's cliff walk, explore the remains of old forts or skip stones on the rock beach.

The Longfellow House — mainehistory.org — is where famed poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow grew up in downtown Portland in the early 19th century. Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$7 for senior citizens and students, and \$3 for children.

The Portland Museum of Art — portlandmuseum.org — is Maine's largest art museum



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Beach-goers enjoy a warm afternoon June 1, in Old Orchard Beach, Maine. The oceanside town, 20 minutes south of Portland, is a popular vacation destination with its food stands, arcades, carnival rides and the rumble of Harley-Davidsons.

with a collection of more than 17,000 objects housed in three buildings. Tickets are \$10 for adults, and admission is free on Fridays, 5 p.m.-9 p.m.

WHERE TO EAT: You'll find fishermen alongside lawyers bellying up to the counter and in booths at Becky's Diner, 390 Commercial St. — beckysdiner.com — eating good-sized meals for reasonable prices.

Elsewhere on the water-

front, customers at the no-frills Gilbert's Chowder House, 92 Commercial St. — gilbertschowderhouse.com — can eat inside at a counter or a table or outside on a patio overlooking the harbor. The

menu features fresh seafood (scallops, shrimp, oysters, had-dock, lobsters, crabmeat, mussels), but the restaurant is best-known for its five types of chowders — which you can order in a bread bowl.